

# THE MAILBOAT

Special Homecoming Edition

\$3.00

*"There's hardly a day goes by that I don't miss that place ...  
It's the peace and quiet that's there, and it's home ."*

Miss Marian Gray Babb  
"One of the last to leave"



"... coming home"

© Frances Eubanks.

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NC 28531

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## Bowline

Believe it or not, the spring **Mailboat** is complete -- and it's still spring! It has been a TOTAL EFFORT of all involved to have this edition ready after only a few weeks since completing the (late) winter issue, but I believe it has been well worth the struggle.

The excitement of being a part of Portsmouth's Homecoming '92 has been indeed a PRIVILEGE. This opportunity is one that I felt would be meaningful to all our **Mailboat** readers, not just those who will be able to attend on April 25. The Friends -- especially Frances Eubanks and Connie Mason -- have been most helpful in helping compile this sampling of Portsmouth history and memories. With this -- as with all other topics in our coastal history -- the hardest part was deciding what to include in the limited space available. We invite all of you who are particularly interested in Portsmouth to pursue the resources available. Much has been (and is being) done to record that community's past, yet more remains to be uncovered and "pieced together." The Friends encourage you to be a part of their efforts to bring together Portsmouth's history ... and to secure it for future generations who will -- like us -- experience the "beauty and charm" of Portsmouth.

\*\*\*  
This edition of **The Mailboat** begins our third year of publication ... a milestone we should all be proud of! Our third year looks promising, and we invite you to continue your support of this publication and its efforts to "write it down" ... For many of you, the spring issue marks the time for you to RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION -- so check your mailing label to see your current status. If you need to renew, it will be MARKED IN RED. Please take the time now to send in your renewal. (See page 34.)

We are making plans for a "subscription drive" in May and welcome you to send us the names of friends, family and neighbors who you think might be interested in being a subscriber - or maybe a partner. We need your help in reaching others who share our interest in the stories and history we are working to record. Thank you for taking the time to forward those names and addresses to us.

Again, our thanks to you -- for without you there would be **No Mailboat**. We look forward to 1992 with excitement as we grow and strengthen in our preservation and publishing endeavors. We invite you to continue with us ... Together we can rekindle the stories of yesterday for years to come.

## Portsmouth Mailboat Notes

*The following notes were collected by Sonny Williamson during his research of life saving stations:*

On November 8, 1904 the gasoline schooner **METEOR**, 13-tons, #93340 owned by the Beaufort, Morehead City and Ocracoke Steamship Company ran aground at 9 a.m. on the east end of "Horse Island Channel" while en route from Beaufort to Ocracoke with a crew of three, and three passengers. The vessel was under the command of Captain A. B. Styron of Davis and was in the process of delivering the U. S. Mail. Crewmen were Ansil Chapin of Beaufort and Samuel E. Styron of Atlantic. She was discovered by Surfman H. D. Goodwin. The station crew ran anchors and floated the vessel within the hour. (The **METEOR**, 44 x 12.5 feet was built at Smyrna in 1902. She was still working under sail (with an auxiliary engine) in 1915 but was converted to full gasoline power (17 hp) sometime before 1920. She was owned by Mitchell Reels of Merrimon in 1925.)

\*\*\*  
On December 8, 1904 the **METEOR** is aground again, this time on the west end of Little Channel. Keeper McWilliams reports that Captain Styron was "un-acquainted." The "mailboat" was on time, because Surfman Goodwin watched her go aground at 9 a.m. The station crew again floated the vessel within a few minutes. The crew was the same as on November 8, but they had no passengers.

\*\*\*  
On January 11, 1910 the gas boat **VIOLA** (7-tons, #204179) lost her propeller in "Teaches Hole Channel while carrying the U. S. Mail." The lifesavers went to their assistance and towed them into Ocracoke Harbor, their destination. Their vessel was in command of Thomas Hamilton and Joseph Mason of Atlantic.

\*\*\*  
At 7:30 a.m. on December 28, 1910 the gas boat **VIOLA** while "Carrying the U. S. Mail" ran aground on Beacon Island Shoal one and one-half miles north of the station. The keeper decided that the vessel could not be floated until the next high tide, "so the Captain, Mail Clerk and 2 lady passengers came ashore and got dinner." The station crew returned later and with the help of Jody Styron in his gas boat, the vessel was floated uninjured at 5:10 p.m. Captain J. W. Robinson returned to Ocracoke for the night. (Perhaps rain nor sleet, nor dark of night will stop the U. S. Mail, but it don't mention "Beacon Island Shoal.")

\*\*\*  
On the night of October 18, 1911 the gas boat **HERO**, (9-tons, #205486), owned by Thomas Hamilton ran ashore on the north side of Beacon Island Shoal while on passage from Ocracoke to Beaufort, "Carrying the U. S. Mail." The lookout discovered her at sunrise the following morning. Keeper McWilliams explains:

"I employed Mr. J. A. Styron and his gas boat for \$3.00 for to take us to the wreck & to assist us in getting her off. We used Mr. Styron boat to haul her bow around toward deep water. We then put the boat ahead of the Mailboat & part of crew got on the bow ahead of the Mailboat & part of crew got on the bow with oars & running the engine in each boat, we managed to float her at 2:30 p.m. uninjured. She then proceeded back to Ocracoke for a start on her trip the next morning."

\*\*\*

On October 2, 1912 the gas boat **VIOLA** (7-tons, #204719) ran aground in "Brars Channel" while on way to Ocracoke from Beaufort transporting the "U. S. Mail" and two passengers; Mrs. Ruth Willis and baby from Marshallberg. The vessel was discovered at sunrise and the passengers and mail were taken to Ocracoke and the vessel towed into Portsmouth for engine repairs.

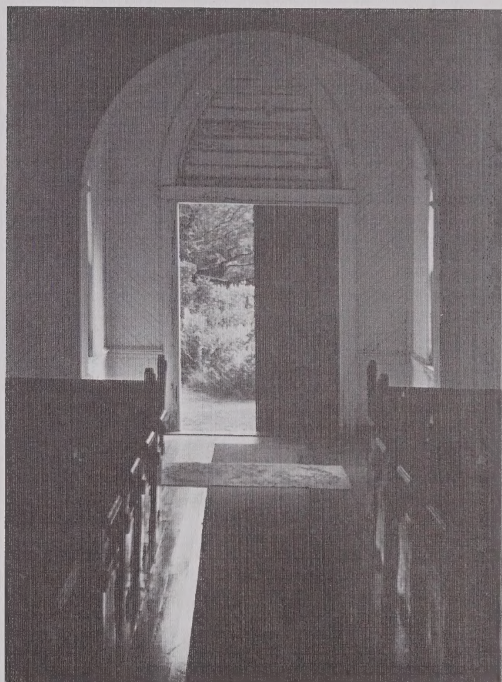


## Welcome home ...

... to Portsmouth natives, families and friends. Whether you are joining us on the island on the 25th, or joining us through the pages of this collection of Portsmouth memories days -- maybe weeks, months, years -- later, we welcome you to join all of us as we rekindle our love for this community and her people.

We hope this event will be only a beginning of your renewed appreciation and concern for this beautiful village and its rich history. May the beauty and spirit of this occasion stir in you the desire to be an active part of preserving this part of our coastal heritage for generations to come.

Homecoming '92 Committee



©Frances Eubanks

## Dedication

Portsmouth stirred the heart and imagination of David Murrill. David was a Moreheader by birth and an Outer Banker by blood. His roots were deep in the sandy banks and his zealous concern for their preservation placed him in the forefront of **The Friends of Portsmouth Island.**

David looked forward to the work at hand, especially homecoming. Only his own "homecoming" prevents his bodily presence with us today. We dedicate the spirit and joy shared on Portsmouth this day to our friend, David Murrill.

*Ode to David Murrill*

*Born a mainlander ...  
Raised a mainlander ...  
Died a Banker.*

*- From a fellow Banker*

## Portsmouth Methodist Church Homecoming Service

April 25, 1992

"Brightly beams our Father's mercy, from His lighthouse evermore;

But to us He gives the keeping of the lights along the shore.

Let the lower lights be burning! Send a gleam across the wave!

Some poor fainting, struggling seaman, You may rescue, you may save."

Call to Worship . . . . . Organ Prelude  
Opening Prayer

Welcome . . . . . Connie Mason, President  
Friends of Portsmouth Island

Hymn of Praise . . . . . "I Love to Tell the Story"  
Recognition of Guests . . . . . Jessie Lee Babb Dominique  
Special Music . . . . . "Joyful Noise"

Short History of Portsmouth  
Recognition of Portsmouth Families  
Music

Scripture and Sermon . . . . . Rev. Clyde Denny  
Ocracoke United Methodist Church

Rev. Ben Sharpe  
Atlantic United Methodist Church

Closing Hymn . . . . . "God Be With You Till We Meet Again"  
Benediction and Blessing



**"Timeline"****Portsmouth and nearby Islands**

Compiled by Connie Mason

- 1753 Colonial Assembly of North Carolina passed legislation for a town on Core Banks to be called Portsmouth.
- 1754 Start of French and Indian War.
- 1755 Construction begins on Fort Granville to defend Ocracoke Inlet from privateers.
- 1756 First town lots sold to John Tolson, John Tweton, William Denham, Joseph Tweton.
- 1758 Fort Granville - garrisoned by a company of troops.
- 1759 Portsmouth resident, Valentine Wade, charged with permitting dancing, drinking, card playing, and dice in his house/tavern on Sundays.
- 1760 St. Johns Parish Church appointed a reader to Portsmouth.
- 1763 End of French and Indian War.
- 1764 Fort Granville no longer in use.
- Portsmouth: Listed as an official commodity inspection point. Custom's powers; inspect hemp, flax, flax seed, pork and beef, rice, flour, indigo, butter, tar, pitch, turpentine, staves, heading lumber and shingles.
- 1769 Hurricane, much damage in New Bern.
- 1773 Eight pilots signed a petition complaining that "unlicensed" negroes were piloting vessels and seriously affecting the business of pilots.
- 1774 A windmill on Portsmouth deeded to Elijah Pigott by John Nelson.
- 1775 American Revolution, lasted until 1783, British blockade but colonists carried supplies through Ocracoke Inlet - thought to include some for Washington's army at Valley Forge.

**Notes from Shell Castle ...**Reprinted from David Stick's **The Outer Banks of North Carolina**

... The government lighthouse was not the only structure going up on Shell Castle at that time [1790's], for two individuals, one a resident of the little town of Portsmouth on Core Banks and the other a prominent merchant and ship owner of the town of Washington on the Pamlico River, were building a virtual trading city there.

These two, John Wallace of Portsmouth and John Gray Blount of Washington, had secured state grants in November of 1789 for five islands just inside Ocracoke Inlet. The largest of these was a fifty-acre "island" of sand known as Dry Sand Shoal; another was "an island of marsh" containing twenty acres and called "Bacon Island" or "Beacon Island"; the other three were "oister rocks," huge piles of oyster shells varying in size from forty-acre Long Dry Rock to twenty-five acre Old Rock and fifteen-acre Remus's Rock.

Wallace and Blount had promptly changed the name of "Old Rock" to "Shell Castle" and made preparations for converting it into a major shipping and trading center. Here vessels from the open sea could tie up at Wallace and Blount docks, unload their cargoes, take on supplies, undergo repairs, and then load their outbound cargoes, without ever having to cross the Ocracoke Swash, enter Pamlico Sound, or venture close to the old port towns up the rivers.

The two seem to have been well suited for the business venture they were planning. John Wallace was a resident of the Banks who had accumulated considerable land in the area and was fully acquainted with the peculiar navigation problems at Ocracoke Inlet. John Gray Blount was a former member of the Council of State, a representative to the General Assembly, partner in the prosperous firm of John Gray and Thomas Blount, Merchants, owner of extensive land holdings in the vicinity of Washington, and operator of a small fleet of vessels trading to the West Indies and Europe.

Blount, long concerned over the difficulty in shipping his cargoes to and from the Pamlico River, was interested primarily in having a facility at Ocracoke where his own vessels could exchange cargo -- with his small scows, flats, and lighters operating between there and Washington in the sounds and rivers, while his larger vessels used Ocracoke as a base for ocean voyages. To a great extent, therefore, Blount was the silent partner, with Wallace residing on Shell Castle and taking active charge of the business.

They started out, probably as early as 1790, with the construction of wharves, a warehouse, a grist mill and windmill, and one or more residences. They soon added a small store and began branching out in all directions, operating a fishery, pretty well controlling pilotage in the inlet, and providing small boats as lighters for those vessels which had to cross over the swash to the sound.

Soon after the business was started, John Wallace acquired the unofficial title of "Governor of Shell Castle," and at times he conducted himself like a feudal prince of old. In 1792 one of the clerks wrote to Blount complaining that Wallace was bungling up the business for fair. Every time he relieved the clerk in the store, he not only failed to make notations about the sales but would pocket all of the money he took in and drink up most of the rum besides.

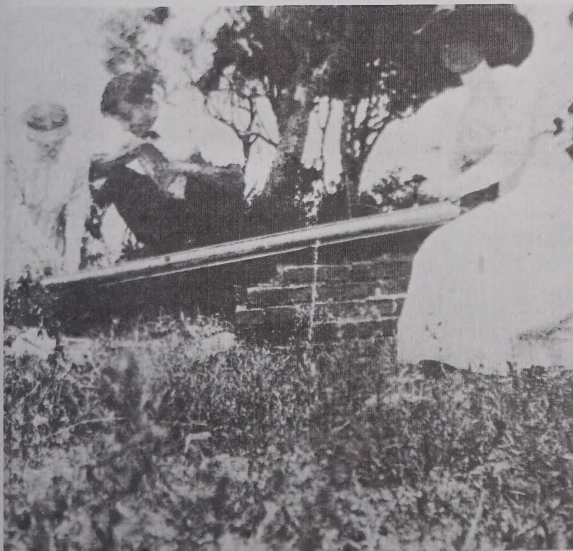
... Additional warehouses and a lumber yard were added; new wharves were built; a large store and ship chandlery was completed in 1797, and so were extensive cisterns. A porpoise fishery was added, more



lighters and other types of boats were bought, the residences were remodeled, and by 1800, when a tavern was constructed, the main building at Shell Castle was 300 feet long.

The Shell Castle Lighthouse was completed and lighted in 1798, and the following year Blount and Wallace sold the government nearly Beacon Island, and arrangements were made to build a fort there ...

The Wallace-Blount business at Shell Castle continued to prosper, and by 1800 the census showed a total of twenty-five people living there, including five white males and fifteen slaves owned by Wallace. In addition to the lighthouse, an official United States port of entry was established at Shell Castle, and in early May, 1806, when William Tatham arrived at Ocracoke Inlet to begin an accurate survey of the coast between Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout, "Governor Wallace" provided him and his associates with "a couple of private rooms" as office space. By that time Shell Castle was an important and established ingredient in North Carolina's growing maritime trade, for of all the canals proposed in the decade following the Revolution only the Dismal Swamp Canal had been constructed, and Ocracoke Inlet was still the main port of entry for a large part of North Carolina.



Portsmouth 1912, Governor Wallace's grave. Photo from Sarah Roberts Styron collection.

- 1776 American merchant sloop **Polly** captured by British, brought about an immediate investigation into defense of Outer Banks.
- 1779 Portsmouth pilot, Adam Gaskins, Captain of militia stationed on Portsmouth to protect Ocracoke Inlet against British, praised for actions by NC Council.
- 1789 Land grant of Ocracoke Inlet Islands given to "governor" John Wallace and John Gray Blount which included Shell Castle Island.
- 1790's Wallace and Blount construct wharves, warehouses, gristmill, store, tavern, and porpoise fishery on Shell Castle, as well as lightering operations.
- 1795 Hurricane!
- 1797 Blount and Wallace sell Beacon Island to Federal Government. Bought with the intent of building fortifications.
- 1800 Official U.S. Port of Entry established on Shell Castle. 40-45 people residing on Shell Castle.
- 1802 Second lighthouse in NC completed and lighted on Shell Castle Island.
- 1804 Three taverns located on Portsmouth.
- 1806 Hurricane! Thirty-one wrecks sighted in Ocracoke Inlet.  
  
Academy noted on Portsmouth survey map.  
  
Ocracoke Customs house established on Portsmouth.
- 1810 The oldest **surviving** grave on Portsmouth: A Rhode Island Sea Captain, Thomas Greene.  
  
"Governor" John Wallace dies. Begins decline of Shell Castle, (shoaling up of Wallace's channel main reason).  
  
Population, Portsmouth, 347.



## North Carolina's First Hospital

Marvin P. Rozeat, M.D.

*Reprinted from North Carolina Medical Journal, June, 1991.*

Portsmouth was contrived by the Colonial Government in 1753 to fill a crucial need in North Carolina: facilitation of the practice of "lightering." Bound as the state is by the Outer Banks, which are cut by treacherous, changing inlets, maritime shipping had from the beginning avoided North Carolina's harbors for Charleston and cushier Chesapeake ports. Ocean going ships drew too much water to manage the systems of bars, swashes, shoals and sounds. Ships fit for commerce within the sounds were too small for trans-oceanic work. The best solution at the time was to "lighter" (lighten) large ships arriving from Europe, New England and the West Indies near the inlets, transferring portions of the cargoes to smaller ships, "coasters" which could then distribute them to interior towns. Thus lightened and therefore drawing less water, the larger ships could enter the inlets to lie at anchor in the relative protection of the islands, take on provisions, give crews shore leave, etc. This business, cumbersome, labor-intensive and dangerous as it was, actually worked; reliable observers of the early 1800s described seeing as many as "30 to 60 sail of ship" in the roadsteads around Portsmouth at one time. Lightering required locals to pilot the ships in and out, hands to assist with cargo transfer, wharves, warehouses and other storage facilities, and all the ancillary furniture of a busy port town - which soon appeared at Portsmouth, adjacent to Ocracoke Inlet and Ocracoke Island.

The lightering and coasting trade brought another element to this busy, lucrative scene; sick seamen. They came from abroad, as well as the interior towns, with scurvy, smallpox, dysentery, fractures, infected wounds, venereal disease, insanity, yellow fever, ague, and miasmas (they rarely lived long enough to have strokes, heart attacks and cancer). Not being fit for duty (many posed potential quarantine problems for their ships at the next port of call), they were "dumped" on the island, more or less to fend for themselves. Generally poor, filthy and graceless, they made a sorry sight, and were a major problem for the islanders. Care, such as it was for these wretches, was provided in homes, haphazardly. There was no physician within forty miles of Portsmouth until 1828.

### The Marine Hospital Service

Congress, following a British practice, established a system of providing "Relief for Sick and Disabled Seamen" by an act of July 16, 1798, signed into law by President John Adams. This was, in reality, a compulsory, payroll-deduction, health insurance scheme. Under this plan, \$.20 was deducted by the ships' masters from the monthly pay of each seaman ("hospital money"), and paid to the Collector of Customs at each point of entry. The collector, in turn, disbursed the funds, procuring for sick and disabled seamen, "relief," in the

form of medical care, nursing, medicines, lodging and board, such as it might be available locally. Ocracoke was made a port of entry in 1806. James Taylor was appointed the first collector. The collectors at Ocracoke, many of whom resided at Portsmouth, managed the medical care of seamen in these two towns.

As one might imagine, this system was not a great improvement on the old - with two exceptions: first, the locals who assisted beneficiaries of the fund were rewarded for their trouble. Second, in 1828 collector Joshua Taylor was able to attract a physician to Portsmouth, Dr. John W. Potts, who signed a contract to be hospital physician for an annual salary of \$1,500. At about this time the island's population was about 300. The pickings being lean, Dr. Potts quickly saw that maintaining a hospital at this remote location, even with a private practice on the side, was a grim proposition.

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He subcontracted with Dr. Samuel Dudley the next year. There followed a series of physicians working out of a small, rented two-room dwelling in the most primitive circumstances imaginable. With high tides and storms, sea water flowed over the floors of the "hospital." Drinking water, described as "brackish and bitter," was obtained from a shallow hole dug in the sand. Everyone could see this was an intolerable situation. The lightering business kept building, and the sick and disabled seamen kept coming.

### The Hospital at Portsmouth

Aware that marine hospitals had been built at Norfolk, Boston, Charleston, and Mobile, the collectors and other prominent citizens barraged a succession of Secretaries of the Treasury and other officials for a real hospital at Portsmouth. Enthusiastic supporters envisaged a facility which could be a referral center. At one point the collector complained that he had 17 seriously ill seamen whom he had to put up in a rough boathouse. Finally, an 1842 act of Congress appropriated \$8,500 to build a hospital. A lengthy process of legal contortions over title to the land, planning, bidding, contracting, inspecting and provisioning delayed opening of the hospital until 1847. This was a very substantial two story structure, built on piers, with a fireplace in each room, primitive running water, spacious "piazzas" (porches), and separate quarters for the hospital physician, and at times, a "medical student." Two plans submitted during the bidding for this structure were recently found in the letters



from the Collectors of Customs to the Secretary of the Treasury at the National Archives.

The hospital had a brief existence - as a hospital. The practice of lightering peaked about the time the hospital doors opened. With the arrival of rail service and other improvements at more traditional deep-water ports such as Wilmington and Beaufort, the lightering business at Ocracoke Inlet began to fall off, never to recover. During the 1850s a varied, but steadily dwindling, patient population sought relief at the United States Marine Hospital at Portsmouth. At times during the last half of the decade, the beds were empty. The expense of maintaining such a facility at this remote and meteorologically hostile site became apparent to Congress, and plans were started to construct North Carolina's "main" marine hospital at Wilmington. The Civil War put an end to both endeavors.

During the Civil War, Confederate forces occupied the Outer Banks, but were easily dislodged by Federals in August, 1861. Most Portsmouth Island residents fled to interior towns; less than half returned after the war. Except for fishing, subsistence farming and active involvement with the Lifesaving Service and Coast Guard, the economy continued to dwindle. The hospital building, never used as a hospital after the war and abandoned by the Federal Government by 1872, was put to a variety of uses - among them, dance hall, weather station, and telegraph station. It burned in 1894.

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*All that is left of the hospital is the cistern. Following a practice which is still used by many Outer Banks residents, rainwater was collected from the roofs by gutters, and carried through downspouts to large tanks for storage.*

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All that is left of the hospital is the cistern. Following a practice which is still used by many Outer Banks residents, rainwater was collected from the roofs by gutters, and carried through downspouts to large tanks for storage. The hospital's original wooden cistern, quickly showed an annoying tendency to leak, and by 1852, had rotted irreversibly. After the usual series of pleas, bids, contracts, deals, and inspections, a fine brick/masonry cistern was built in 1853, for \$150. This structure, about 9 ft. in diameter, stands a few yards southwest of the Lifesaving Station. Presently impounding a few gallons of green slime and countless million mosquito larvae, it once contained "the sweetest water" on the island. Nearby, in the sand, are fragments of brick work, probably one of the hospital's fireplace footings.

The United States Marine Hospital Service continued to grow. It was extensively reorganized in 1870, became the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service in 1902, and the United States Public Health Service in 1912. With the addition of the National Institutes of Health, the U.S.P.H.S. grew to the multi-billion dollar agency we know today. The crumbling remains of one of the first U.S. Marine Hospitals and of North Carolina's first hospital stand in mysteriously beautiful Portsmouth Village, silent witnesses to the humble origins of great health care systems of the state and nation.

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1812    | War of 1812 - lasts until 1814.  |
| 1813    | 500 British troops storm Portsmouth, occupation, 5 days. Savage destruction of property and livestock.<br><br>Plans underway for fort on Beacon Island (Ft. Morgan/Ft. Ocracoke). Actual construction between 1813 and 1814. |
| 1823    | Lighthouse on Ocracoke built.  |
| 1826    | Records show schooner, <b>ELIZABETH</b> , built on Portsmouth. Another built in 1869.  |
| 1827    | Hurricane!   |
| 1828    | Small hospital established by Public Health Service, Dr. Potts first doctor. Located in small house on Portsmouth.   |
| 1829    | Dr. Samuel Dudley takes over Dr. Potts position in hospital.   |
| 1831-36 | Smallpox outbreak, Dr. Dudley's abilities questioned.  |
| 1835    | Hurricane!   |
| 1839    | Hurricane, sweeps away most of livestock!  |
| 1840    | Post office established and Methodist Episcopal Church erected.  |
| 1842    | 1400 vessels go through Ocracoke Inlet.<br><br>War of 1812 hero, Otway Burns moves to Portsmouth to retire.  |
| 1846    | Hurricane opens up Hatteras Inlet (Oregon Inlet also), trade begins to shift to these inlets.  |
| 1847    | New building erected for Marine Hospital. To be used as hospital for next 13 years.  |
| 1850    | Census recorded 70 dwellings and a population of 505, including 27 pilots, 37 mariners, 7 boatmen, 3 fisherman, 5 merchants, 4 carpenters, 2 farmers and a teacher with 77 students.   |



## Portsmouth Life-Saving Service

### Sonny Williamson

#### From Unsung Heroes of the Surf

... On July 15, 1893, the Secretary of the Treasury gave permission to use a portion of the Marine Hospital grounds at Portsmouth as a site for building a Life-Saving Station. The station was completed on June 4, 1894, and left in charge of A. J. Styron.

That following August 22, Ferdinand G. Terrell was appointed as the first keeper duty due to a misunderstanding with Styron, did not officially assume duties at the station until October 6, 1894.

*From the beginning Terrell had his hands full. While the dispute was being settled, he made his first assist to a vessel in distress, the 540-ton British barkentine, J. W. DEXTER.*

From the beginning Terrell had his hands full. While the dispute was being settled, he made his first assist to a vessel in distress, the 540-ton British barkentine J. W. DEXTER. Although he was not living at the station at the time and had to hire a volunteer crew, Terrell boarded the vessel and assisted the crew to move her to a safe anchorage.

A controversy was also brewing concerning the hiring of the first permanent lifesaving crew. It came to a head when Terrell received the following letter, dated September 7, 1894, from Superintendent Kimball.

Sir:

*This office is in receipt of a letter stating that Mr. William C. Williams, a merchant of Portsmouth, is offering to obtain positions in your crew for certain persons if they will pay him \$25.00 each and trade in his store and that places have been promised to persons who are unable to read or write and to one man who is a cripple, also that two men who reside 20 miles from the station have been promised positions while there are plenty of competent men residing within a mile ...*

The superintendent requested an explanation. Although Terrell's answer is not available, changes were made in the lifesaving crew shortly thereafter.

According to a January 1895 "daily log" the crew consisted of Joseph W. Robinson, George Dixon, Augustus Mason, Joseph Styron, George R. Willis, Dennis Mason and Washington Roberts. Evidently this was a "volunteer crew."

The dispute continued until a permanent crew was finally hired sometime in March with Dennis Mason and Washington Roberts being promoted to #1 and #2 positions. This seemed to settle the dispute.

Terrell attended several wrecks, including the total loss of the RICHARD S. SPOFFORD, prior to finally settling on a permanent crew.

The following is a listing of surfmen who served at the Portsmouth Life-Saving Station after the dispute and until it was taken over by the U. S. Coast Guard in 1915.

Dennis Mason, Washington Roberts, George W. Gilgo, David Salter, James T. Salter, Joseph Dixon, William T. Willis, Leonard W. Nelson, David S. Willis, Daniel W. Yeomans, William Fulcher, Melville M. Pigott, Joseph W. Fulcher, H. D. Goodwin, Alfred H. Chadwick, L. D. Williams, Herbert S. Pigott, Homer Harris, Ernest R. Guthrie, Mitchell Hamilton, Monroe Gilgo, Simon Garrish, Gary Bragg, Benjamin G. O'Neal, and M. P. Guthrie

Under Terrell's command, the lifesaving crew attended 37 distress calls of which 12 became total losses. They were the RICHARD S. SPOFFORD, ETTA M. BARTER, SALLIE BISSELL, S. WARREN HALL, CHARMER, FRED WALTON, LYDIA A. WILLIS, HENRIETTA HILL, THREE FRIENDS, LEADING BREEZE, C. G. CRANMER, VERA CRUZ VII.

On October 8, 1903 Keeper Terrell resigned and was replaced by Charles S. McWilliams who served in the position as Keeper until he retired on February 24, 1916, over a year after the station and crew were incorporated into the U. S. Coast Guard.

*With the coming of reliable navigational aids, steam and gasoline power the duties and responsibilities of the lifesavers were slowly changing.*

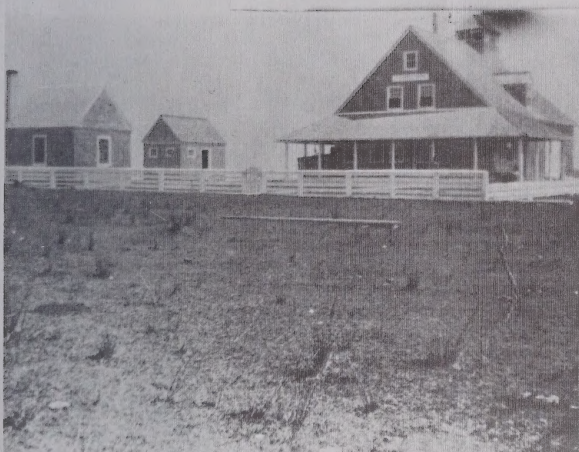
During McWilliams' tenure 50 vessels were assisted - only four were completely lost. They were the JOHN I. SNOW, ANNIE COMBER, MELROSE and ARROYO.

With the coming of reliable navigational aids, steam and gasoline power the duties and responsibilities of the lifesavers were slowly changing.

On January 8, 1915, the inevitable happened when the Life-Saving Service was combined with the Revenue-Cutter Service to form the U. S. Coast Guard.

An era had ended.





1920's - U. S. Coast Guard Station (Francis Taylor Collection)



1920's - U. S. Coast Guard Station (Francis Taylor Collection)

1853 Brick cistern, 8' deep x 10' diameter piped water directly to Marine Hospital. It replaced old wooden cisterns.

Second lighthouse built on Beacon Island lighted. Useless by 1857.

1856-60 Screwpile lighthouse erected on Northwest Point of Royal Shoal.

1860 Population 469, 81 houses.

Marine Hospital closes after 32 years of service.

1861 Confederates abandon Ft. Morgan (Ocracoke) on Beacon Island and Camp Washington (500 troops) on Portsmouth. Villagers flee until war's end.

1866 Portsmouth Excelsior Oil and Guano Company established. Open until 1869.

1867 Screwpile lighthouse erected on Southwest Point of Royal Shoal.

Customs office closes. Moves to New Bern.

1870 Dr. Samuel Dudley dies. Served as town doctor for 40 years. Grave on Portsmouth. Bones exhumed by family to New Bern or Washington.

Population 320; 59 houses on Portsmouth.

1876 U.S. Government granted permission to Army Signal Corps to use 2 rooms in old hospital as a Weather Bureau Station.

1880 22 residents; 44 dwellings. Wallace's channel useless.

Telegraph station opened.

1883 Signal Corps Weather Station closed. Briefly reopened 1885 for 5 months.

1883 Federal legislation passed authorizing 3 Lifesaving Stations on Core Banks.

1893 Marine Hospital building burned down.

1894 U.S. Life Saving Station opened. 7 member crew.



## "Portsmouth Island People"

*Ben B. Salter and Dot Salter Willis*

### *From Portsmouth Island: Short Stories and History*

The people that were natives of Portsmouth Island were honest, decent, hard-working people. The men were seafaring men either being in the life-saving station there or fishermen. Some of the men were hunting guides in the winter. When I speak of fishermen, I mean they fished, oystered and clammed for a living. They worked hard but always managed to make a fairly good living for themselves and their families. They owned their own homes and boats.

When they came from fishing they would always gather around and mend their nets. On days it was too bad to go fishing they would sit in their fish house for hours and mend the nets. I would enjoy these days as a young boy, helping and listening to the older men tell tales of things that happened on Portsmouth long before I was born.

In winter it was time to hunt and oyster, you could catch oysters during the months that had an "R" in them as September, October, November, December, January, February, March and April. In the summer they fished and clammed, some would catch crabs. The women stayed at home, took care of the children and kept their homes spotless clean. They took pride in keeping everything, even their yards, as clean as could be. They kept their children clean and neat, there might be a patch or two on their pants or dresses but they were always clean. Their mothers taught the girls to read, write and sew. They also taught the boys reading and writing and to keep their rooms neat. Of course they send their children to school when they were old enough to go, but most of them could say their ABC's and print their names before they went to school.

The school would only be six months a year if it was not a stormy year. If it was stormy the teachers were afraid to go to the little school house. I remember one year we had school only two months. A storm came in October and scared the teacher so bad she left the Island and did not return.

The women would all sew for themselves, husbands and children. They all wore homemade clothes most of the time. In later years some would order their clothes for parties or to wear to church. They made the trimming to go on their dresses, tatting, lace and ruffles. Sometimes you could go by a house and see the ladies setting around all working with their fingers making tatting or fancy work to go on the baby dresses or little girls dresses. They would sometimes gather in one living room, five or six ladies - sometimes more, to sew and visit at the same time. They made their own quilts and blankets, also their pillows and feather beds. The pillows and feather beds were made from the feathers of the fowl that the men killed in winter. They sewed thick cloth called "bed ticking" to make the pillows and feather beds. Every family had these to sleep on. They were real warm in the winter.

The children would all be there playing together. The small ones would play where their mamas could watch them, the ones big enough would help their mothers. The ladies would always take time to show the girls how to do this work. People in those

days took time to teach their children how to keep house and do the necessary things that had to be done.

They would read the Bible to them and teach them how to live and love each other and God. How I wish things were more like that today.

The people on Portsmouth would have pretty gardens. Starting in early spring to plant their gardens so they could have fresh vegetables. Most every family had a nice garden. They raised potatoes, tomatoes, corn, cabbage, cucumbers, squash, beans, peas, watermelons and the prettiest collards! I remember as a boy seeing all these things growing on Portsmouth Island.

There has always been dew berries on the island during the months of May and June. People still go there to pick berries to make pies or jelly. There used to be the largest fig trees on the island, two or three in every yard almost. The women would make fig preserves enough to last all year. Fig preserves and hot biscuits are good on cold mornings for breakfast.

The people on Portsmouth were mostly soft spoken people, never seeming to get nervous and excited as people of today. They lived together helping each other as best they could. There were two or three ladies that were "midwives." These took care of the other ladies when their children were born. There were no doctors on the island after the hospital closed. When somebody got real sick they were taken by boat to the mainland.

For past-time the people would gather after supper at one house and the best reader would read aloud to the group. They would go quite often to my Aunt Melissa's home. She was a good reader, sometimes she would read for two or three hours. After Thelma and I were married they would gather to Mama's and Papa's and Thelma would read to the group and they would stay until bedtime, then take their lanterns and go home. Most of the time the stories would be continued until the next night, this went on until the book was read.

At Christmas, New Years and other holidays, even some Saturday nights, the older people and teenagers would gather to the old hospital before it was destroyed and have square dances. After the hospital was destroyed they would gather in the largest living room to dance. Uncle Samuel Tolson was a great dancer as was Uncle Dave Salter. Some of the people would come from Cedar Island to these dances, everyone would have a good time. The people that came from Cedar Island would spend the night with some of the young people on Portsmouth.

Sometimes the men would play checkers or other games to amuse themselves. We all enjoyed these times and days on Portsmouth Island. The homes were lighted by kerosene lamps or lanterns and heated by wood or coal. They cooked on wood or coal or kerosene stoves. This fuel had to be brought from the mainland by boat. There were two or three stores at one time on the Island, but they could not get these items.

In later years some of the people got what was called a Delco to have better lighting, some had lights by using batteries. Then later the church and some of the homes had gas lights.

The people are all gone from this island today, so is this peaceful way of life ...



### About Henry ...

Mr. Pigott was a resourceful man, a requirement of anyone living virtually alone on an island where there is no electricity, no plumbing and no telephone service.

In one out-building on his property ... Mr. Pigott stored boxes of window panes, all sizes of nails and wooden shingles to repair his home. Mr. McNeill, who leased the house after Mr. Pigott died, still has a shopping list Mr. Pigott had prepared. It was for two fly swatters and eight pints of bug spray.

The wind blowing across a pan of water kept Mr. Pigott's perishable foods cool ... Mr. Pigott had a miniature screened out-building in which he housed the foods requiring refrigeration. Cool air was produced when the wind blew across the pan of water. Mr. Pigott's fresh water supply came from a cistern.

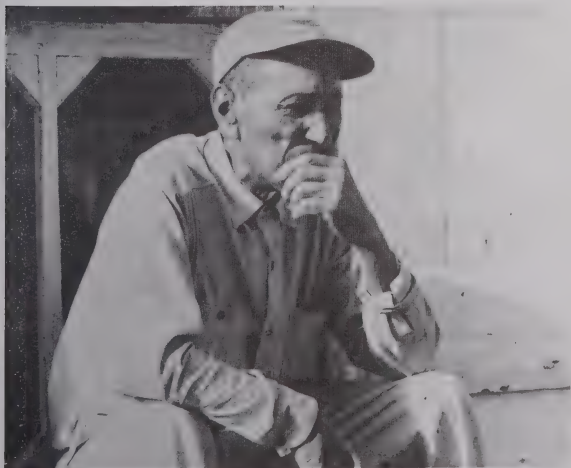
Miss Babb says Mr. Pigott fished for a living. Henry clammed and oystered. He'd get a mess for him and some for us. He always had a garden and grew all kinds of vegetables.

Mr. Pigott also worked for the postal service. Daily he would pole his skiff out to meet the mailboat as it made its way to Ocracoke, then he delivered the mail to the post office ...

Mr. Pigott never married. He shared his two-story home with his younger sister, Elizabeth. they took care of each other, Mr. Salter says. After Lizzie died, Henry was never the same. He was always lonesome for his sister that he loved.

Mr. Pigott died of pneumonia [1971] and was buried next to his sister in the family cemetery behind the Dixon-Babb house. One account of his funeral read, Seventeen men and four women braved a blowing [January] gale of wind to see he was given a fitting funeral on his native island.'

*(Reprinted from Carteret County News Times)*



Henry Pigott, 1970 (©Joel Arrington).

- 1894 75 school children enrolled at school.
- 1899 Hurricane named San Ciriaco, lasted 3 days, much property damage.
- 1903 Barketeer, **VERA CRUZ**, runs aground off Portsmouth with 421 passengers. Residents provide food and lodging (they used all the flour on the island to feed them). Population of Portsmouth 60.
- 1913 Old Methodist Church destroyed by storm.
- 1914-15 New church erected.
- 1915 Life Saving Service Station became Coast Guard Station by merger of Revenue Cutter Service with the Life Saving Service.
- 1917 36 school children.  
U.S. enters WWI. WWI ends 1918.
- 1922 Wreck of **THE MESSENGER OF PEACE**.  
Rum runner caught off NC during Prohibition.
- 1933 Hurricane! Sweeps away last remains of enterprise of Shell Castle.
- 1934 Telegraph/phone service started.
- 1937 Coast Guard decommissioned. (Briefly reopens during WWII).
- 1939 WWII begins. Throughout war, ships can be seen being torpedoed off-shore by German U-boats.
- 1943 School closes.
- 1944 Hurricane! Many residents choose to leave.
- 1945 WWII ends.
- 1949 Mail no longer delivered to Portsmouth, but is picked up by Tom Bragg, who rowed out to meet the mailboat on its way to Ocracoke, NC.
- 1950's 13 residents left by latter half of 1950's.



## Mail Service at Portsmouth



"Miss Annie" and Carl Dixon (Photo from Frances Eubanks Collection).



Henry Pigott and Lum Gaskill, who held the mail carrier contract from Ocracoke from 1968-1971. (Photo from James Barry Gaskill Collection).

"We had a mailboat that ran daily from Ocracoke and Morehead City. There were two boats. One would leave Morehead City and come to Ocracoke. The other would leave Ocracoke of the morning and go to Morehead, get in Morehead about four-thirty in the afternoon and leave Ocracoke about six o'clock. The other one would leave Morehead and come to Ocracoke. They'd pass one another around Harbor Island. There were days they couldn't make it ...

Harbor Island is right at Wainwright where you enter Core Sound. I remember the freeze in '17 and '18. The mailboat stayed to Ocracoke eight days before it could carry the mail. Everything froze up. There were icebergs in Core Sound bigger than this house.

... Somebody always met the mailboat out to Casey's Island. Because there's one main channel that run and the mailboat had to follow the channel. The first man that I ever remember meeting the mailboat was Alfred Dixon, Carl Dixon's daddy. The one that had a home down close to the Haul Over. He ran it for thirty years ... He would go out of the morning and put the mail aboard the boat going to Morehead. Then in the afternoon he would meet the boat and take the mail off coming from here and put the mail on that was going to Ocracoke. Twice a day ... He knew what time the mailboat would get here. About four o'clock in the afternoon, every afternoon. He wouldn't miss it. In the morning about six o'clock. Meet the mailboat that leaves Ocracoke about five. I've been out there to catch the mailboat to go to Morehead. It was dark. Daylight hadn't even started to break.

... He retired and his son, Carl, took it over. He ran it for at least twenty years, Carl did. Before he gave it up. Then he gave it up and moved to Harkers Island. Then Henry Pigott was the main man. He took it over. Whenever Henry had to leave here on business, he would be relieved by Tom Bragg or Ernest. That was Dorothy May's brother, ("the postmistress"). He was relieved by them. He would never leave until he got a relief man to meet the mailboat. I'll tell you that. They just figured it was federal government. It had to be done ... It was the most important thing there was around Portsmouth. Yes, sir.

Henry was paid ... thirty dollars. They could have got more. All they had to have done was to have asked for it, said "I ain't going to run it" and they'd got it. But you couldn't have told them that ...

Now I do know that Carl ran that mail for \$7.50 a month at one time during the Depression. I'll tell you why he did it. There was nothing else around here to do only commercial fish. And if we caught any fish we had to take them to Ocracoke to market. And half the time when we got over there they wouldn't buy them. We'd have to throw them overboard and come back home.

I myself was sitting on the post office porch one afternoon. There was a roof over the porch then and benches around that people sat on. It was a gathering place. I said I believe I'll bid on this mail route next year. The bids are coming up on this thing, and I'll think I'll bid on the thing. And somebody told Carl. I had no intentions of doing it. Just kidding. Somebody told him about it, and he bid \$7.50 a month. He ran that mailboat for months and months for \$7.50 until the postmistress, it was Miss Annie Salter at that time, she told him, she said, "Carl, this is foolishness. You can't live on this money. And there's nobody going to bid on this job against you. There's nobody wants it." So the next time the bids come out, he went back up to \$30 a month. He could have gone to \$60 and got it just as easy ... And Henry, the same way. If Henry had asked \$75 a month, he could have got it. They thought \$30 was the high bid -- as far as you could go."

*Interview with Lionel Gilgo, July 15, 1978 at Portsmouth Island (Recorded by Jim Godwin, reprinted from Cape Lookout National Seashore Oral History Project)*

## Dreams Do Come True

### Thelma Simpson

When my mother, Julia Ellen Goodwin was a little girl, she lived on Cedar Island, almost within sight of the village of Portsmouth. She often heard the men folks in her family speak of happenings and the people who lived on "Portsmouth Island," as the village was spoken of at that time.

She listened as they told of hearing the "Old Folks" tell how Portsmouth was once a thriving seaport with a large hospital, an academy and lots of houses; how ships came into the harbor from far away places bringing strange cargo; and how smaller ships called "lighters" would go out and help bring the cargo into the harbor where it was taken inland to large cities.

She heard tales of shipwrecks and how cargo and victims would wash ashore to be buried by the villagers who often buried them in their village cemeteries. The men from Cedar Island would go over and bid on the salvaged cargo from some of these wrecks. She would beg her father to let her go with him on some of these trips but was always told, "Girls don't go 'galla-vanting' where only menfolks are." Once her father came home with a beautiful "davenport" (sofa) which he had purchased for three dollars at one of these "venders" (vendues).

As she grew older, she still dreamed of going to Portsmouth, one day. When the mailboat stopped by her home on its way to Portsmouth and Ocracoke, she longed to hop aboard and go to Portsmouth, but they had no relatives living in that village and she would not have anywhere to stay the night, for the mailboat did not return until the next day.

After she was grown-up and married, she begged my father to take her with him on some of the many trips to Portsmouth hunting and oystering, but he always answered "Julia, its no place for women." The men camped on the shore or slept on their boats and there were always other men in the party. So, Mama never did get to see Portsmouth while living on Cedar Island or Smyrna.

After we moved to Lennoxville, Papa still made yearly trips to Portsmouth to go hunting and oystering. These trips were usually made a week before Christmas to supply plenty of game and oysters for the Christmas holidays. Mama was always left at home to care for the family and prepare for the event.

Mama never gave up her dream of going to Portsmouth. Finally, in the early 1960's her dream did come true. One of her sons-in-law, Dallas Willis, a "fish spotter" offered to take her to Portsmouth in his plane. To our surprise, she accepted his offer. By this time, most of the people had moved from the village and many of the people and houses were gone, but that did not dissuade Mama, she was determined to take the trip.

So one beautiful morning, Dallas took Mama over to the airport and helped her on board his plane, and off they went. He flew her all the way down Core Sound, over Cedar Island, and on to Portsmouth and Ocracoke.

We were all afraid that something would happen or that she would get sick but this never happened. Mama came home happy and contented. She had seen Portsmouth Island. Her dream had come true.

- 1959 U.S. Post Office closes after 119 years of service to Portsmouth.
- 1966 State of North Carolina began purchase of the island to be included in National Seashore.
- 1971 Last 3 residents leave. Only summer people or former residents return for visits.
- 1976 Cape Lookout National Seashore: officially established.
- 1978 November 29, 1978, Portsmouth is placed on the National Register of Historic Places, an honor roll of areas deemed historically significant to America.

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## Reflections of Portsmouth

Bob & Mary Simpson

"... With the setting sun, the stillness of night had crept over the island, enveloping Doctors Creek. When I stepped out of the house there was no breeze to rustle the trees. There was no moon. The marshes were in deep black shadows. Scarcely noticed, a cloud had moved across the heavens, adding to the feeling of complete and absolute darkness. The lamp inside cast beams of yellowish light through the windows, only to be swallowed by the night. To the south, the low rumble of distant surf was an endless murmur. My eyes tried to adjust as I felt my way to the creek bank. I listened, and heard from a yaupon bush close by the sleepy chirping of small birds, disturbed by presence or bickering over perch preferences. The cloud slid away like a stage curtain, revealing a few stars, then gradually disclosing a universe of glittering gems. Ink-black waters of the creek mirrored silvery images. Clumps of marsh grass were black on black.

A shooting star arched across the heavens. Out of the stillness a flock of Canada geese barked softly, to be echoed shortly by another flock, probably rafted somewhere on the sound, rocking comfortably in the safety of deep water. A thin cloud slipped across the sky, blotting out the stars. Far away on the horizon a light shone brighter than the others, Ocracoke Light, that had warned seamen of unseen dangers in the shoals for two centuries.

Yes, all was right with the world ...





*Portsmouth Village is thought of as a ghost town. True, no one resides there permanently any more, except in eternal rest behind the church, or in family plots about the island. And the homes, for the most part, are gradually decaying into the hummocks and marshes. Roofs have fallen in; graying shingles moldering with green and silvery mosses are returning to the basic elements. But some of the homes whose windows vacantly reflect the red of evening sun are still neatly kept. Lawns are tended and flowers nod in the breeze even in mid-winter. The tall church stands as it has for the past eighty-odd years, painted, neat, clean, waiting silently for a congregation that rarely comes except for occasional weddings and reunions ...*

*... it should remain a monument to man's dreams and heroism.*

Bob Simpson  
When the Water Smokes



## Coming Home

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### "Homecoming at Portsmouth Church Attracts Big Crowd"

Carteret County News-Times, June 11, 1973

More than 300 persons attended homecoming at Portsmouth Methodist Church Sunday.

One hundred ten persons crowded into the picturesque church for the 11 am service ... The service opened and closed with prayer by Ben Salter, Atlantic, oldest Portsmouth native present. Mr. Salter wrote a book about Portsmouth, which became an instant "best seller" on the island yesterday. He will be 74 June 30.

The youngest native present was Mrs. Robert Dominique, Beaufort. Both were recognized by Mrs. Dallas Willis, who planned the program and was a member of the homecoming committee.

Mrs. Dominique welcomed the visitors.

Mrs. Charles Sibley, Huntington, W. Va., was recognized as coming the farthest for homecoming. She had a relative who has lived several years on the island.

Mrs. Willis expressed appreciation to Miss Marian Babb and Mrs. Jean Burke, who spend much time at their homes on the island, for keeping up the church and the cemetery ...

Mrs. Willis gave a brief history of the community and the church, established in 1828. The first published mention of Portsmouth, she noted, was in 1685. The town was chartered in 1753 and the postoffice established in 1848, when the population was about 500 ...



Photo from Dot Salter Willis Collection.

## Years Past

### From America's Atlantic Isles

*H. Robert Morrison and Christine Eckstrom Lee, National Geographic Society (1981)*

Like the residents of Ocracoke, the people of Portsmouth knew the fury of the sea. Now being restored as a historic site, Portsmouth marks the northern boundary of the Cape Lookout National Seashore. Extending south for 55 miles along Core and Shackleford Banks, the seashore is wild and unpopulated, and Portsmouth Village crowns the barren beaches of the Banks like a green oasis.

Located at the northern end of the island, Portsmouth Village was founded in 1753. Like its sister town of Ocracoke across the inlet, Portsmouth was settled by merchants and pilots. For more than a century, the village thrived. With 500 residents, it was once the largest town on the Banks. Then slowly, steadily, over the past century the population dwindled. Storms battered the island. Shoals formed in the inlet, and Portsmouth lost the maritime traffic it needed to survive. With reluctance, Portsmouth families moved away. In 1971 the last two permanent residents left the island.

A storm was approaching as I stood on Portsmouth Island. From the horizon to the shallows, gray seas rocked. The wind spun spray from the breakers and swept sheets of sand down the beach. Low clouds raced across the island. Westward, over the dunes and flats, grasses bowed and shook. Gulls soared overhead, sounding cries that the wind tore from their open bills. As the gusts reached the line of thickets and trees that shelter Portsmouth Village, myrtles, pines, and cedars caught the wind.

At the white clapboard church in the heart of the village, people were filing inside for a special Sunday service. The church was full as the Reverend Jimmy Creech of Ocracoke stood before the congregation, waiting for the last few members to arrive. Past residents, families, and friends had gathered on Portsmouth Island this day for a homecoming. Inside the church, people talked, embraced, nodded greetings. Some clasped ridged hands and strained to see the friend hidden beneath the changes age had made. Many eyes moved from face to face along the pews, and many eyes held tears.

As the last man was seated at the end of my pew, the woman behind him leaned forward and spoke softly, "Ben Salter!" He turned around slowly and smiled. "How are you?" she said. "It's Margaret, Margaret McWilliams Smith. It's been nearly seventy years since I've been back." His eyes brimmed. "Margaret!" The service began, and the members of the congregation bowed their heads in prayer.

"We have not been lost, but we have returned home," Mr. Creech told the congregation. "The place that we call home is more than just the location of our birth. It gives us the images by which we understand ourselves and our world. An island is not just sand that sits in a body of water. It is a land in union with the seas around it." After the service, the rains began to fall, and the wind and the breakers sculpted new forms in the sands of Portsmouth Island.

### "Outer Bankers come home to their village by the sea"

*Jerry Allegood, The News & Observer, October 23, 1980*

PORTSMOUTH ISLAND - Margaret McWilliams Smith walked slowly to the quiet little church here, pausing occasionally to reflect on her first visit to her native Outer Banks village in almost 70 years ...

The village virtually sprang to life as an estimated 350 people gathered for a picnic, church service and tours of the island's historic structures.

For many, the occasion was a time of reminiscing, and for others, like Dallas and Margaret Willis, a homage to the future.

The Willises, who were married in the little Methodist church about two years ago, had their daughter, Caroline Ruth, baptized during a church service Sunday.

"My husband and I both just feel like this is the home of our hearts," Mrs. Willis said after the service. "It just seemed natural to have her baptized here."

... Only 14 people lived on the island by 1950, and the last three full-time residents left in the early 1970s. One of the last to go was Marian Babb, who insisted Sunday that she was forced off the island because everyone left.

"I didn't have any choice in the matter," she said. "I wish I was back there."

Willard Ira Babb, who was born on the island 67 years ago and had not returned since 1968, said many young people left the island to go to school and others sought better jobs.

Many former residents brought along children and grandchildren who had heard tales of the island but had never seen it.

... Throughout the day, older residents spanned the years with hugs and handshakes and eagerly swapped recollections of life in the community. The biggest change they noted was the thick stands of cedar, yaupon and wax myrtle.

As the church bell rang over the island, the pews were filled with squirming children and adults, who fanned themselves with programs. The Rev. Jimmy Creech, a Methodist minister from Ocracoke, praised the homecoming as a celebration of a special people and a special place.

Befitting the location, the service was laced with imagery of the sea in hymns and prayers. During the brief baptismal, Creech sprinkled a handful of island water on the curly headed child who slept peacefully through the occasion.

... By mid-afternoon, the sky darkened and rain began to fall. As the boats moved away from the island, the green-shingled steeple of the church stood out above the trees. Finally it too disappeared from sight, and nature once more ruled the island.



## Coming Home



Portsmouth Methodist Church (1914) -- the "center" of the community; note the "list to the east"rd" from the Storm of '44



The "new" school house, closed in 1943; Mary Dixon was the last to teach here



Henry and Lizzie Pigott house on Doctor's Creek



Backporch and dairy house of Miss Elma Dixon, church organist and "one of the last to leave" in 1971



Jesse Babb House, home of Miss Marian Gray Babb, "one of the last to leave" in 1971



"Wash" Roberts House, oldest building on Portsmouth - possibly the Outer Banks; it was used as a home, tavern and a "stormhouse"



Portsmouth Post Office, closed in 1959; this building was once the "hub" of the island



Theodore and Annie Salter House, once used as the Salter Gun Club



Lionel and Emma Gilgo House, moved to this site from the Life-Saving Service area



Portsmouth Lifesaving Service Station (1894-1915), with summer kitchen; later used as United States Coast Guard Station

(All photos by Frances Eubanks, granddaughter of Mrs. Annie Salter who served as "postmistress" of Portsmouth for many years)



## *The Portsmouth Graves at Cedar Island*

*Dan Laughton Willis*

If you visit some of the cemeteries here on Cedar Island you may come across a number of old graves which seem out of place. These belong to Portsmouth Islanders who long ago were sailed to Cedar Island and buried in various 19th-century cemeteries. Additionally, at least two cemeteries on adjacent Hog Island once were used to bury residents of Portsmouth.

Many of these old graves are today unmarked. Others have been lost to erosion, and only a few of those remaining have tombstones. Hence, the number of Portsmouth Islanders interred in the Cedar Island area is uncertain. However, at least twenty-four individuals can be reliably counted; their names represent ten separate Portsmouth families.

Cedar Island's earliest extant Portsmouth tombstone stands in a rarely visited and much overgrown cemetery at North Bay. The aged and lichen spotted headstone there signals the 1877 burial place of Portsmouth sea captain, Earles Ireland. With simple eloquence Earles' monument records that he died "in the 77th year of his age." His tombstone also states that Earles was the "son of Daniel and Mary Ireland," but the identity of the possibly older, anonymous graves nearby remains conjectural. It is significant though that Daniel Ireland and his family lived in the area after 1793. (See map.)

Earles Ireland likely spent at least some of his youth at North Bay prior to leaving for a successful career over on Portsmouth Island. This connection between the North Bay Irelands and faraway Portsmouth has been largely forgotten on Cedar Island. Yet, Earles' early family ties suggest a plausible explanation for why the Portsmouth captain was brought all that distance for burial.

In those days, of course, transportation by sail was not always agreeable nor quickly ended. Nonetheless, funeral voyages from Portsmouth to Cedar Island were not uncommon. Earles' wife, Matilda A. Roberts, was one of those accorded this final journey: in 1887 she was brought from Portsmouth and buried at North Bay beside her sea-faring captain.

There are several Portsmouth graves in Cedar Island's Community Cemetery. This large graveyard formerly was a much smaller site once known as the Gilgo Cemetery. The first recorded burials there of the respected Portsmouth Gilgos date from the 1902 and the 1906 interments, respectively, of Emeline Robinson Gilgo and her husband William Gilgo. Emeline was a descendant of Cedar Island's pioneering settler, Joseph Robinson, and was closely related to contemporary Cedar Island families as well. Two of her daughters--probably infants--are buried nearby.

The old Gilgo Cemetery contains the 1881 tombstone of young Elijah Dixon; there also are tombstones of the Roberts family. These Portsmouth individuals may be later re-burials from the old Robinson family cemetery then located to the southeast at Robinson's Point. Such exhumations became necessary during the early decades of this century when Core Sound

began its final assault upon the doomed old graveyard then still located out on exposed and vulnerable Robinson's Point.

Local tradition holds that there were a number of early Cedar Island and Portsmouth families laid to rest in the Robinson Cemetery. However, the question of how many Portsmouth Islanders were buried in the now-lost graveyard probably can never be resolved. Although the cemetery had not yet completely washed away, no record was made of it nor any other Cedar Island burial site during the 1930s census of Carteret County cemeteries.

This maddening oversight is especially unfortunate since not everyone was removed from the Robinson Cemetery. And thereby hangs a ghastly, but true tale of ever more destructive storms and of washed away coffins and of grisly human remains churning among the breaking waves and tangled flotsam. Eyewitnesses recall the macabre spectacle of a woman's skull washing along the Core Sound shore with strands of hair intact--pale, thin strands of wet hair incongruously "still clasped by a tortoise shell comb."

Cedar Island's largest number of surviving Portsmouth graves today lies in the Styron Cemetery. Located on high ground near "Tar Kittle" Ridge, this beautiful and historic site has been too long neglected. The unkempt, overgrown appearance of the Styron Cemetery has led to concerns about vandalism and removal of tombstones. After a headstone was reported lying beside the nearby Lola road, some effort was made to clear out the cemetery's trash and underbrush and to present a less abandoned aspect.

The earliest known Portsmouth burial in the Styron Cemetery was that of Christopher Salter who died in 1888. Christopher's wife Matilda Styron Salter was buried beside him four years later, followed in 1917 by their son Zachariah. Nearby lies three-year-old Mary Salter. Is she perhaps the same hapless Portsmouth child who was found washed up on Hog Island Reef in 1906?

Sidney Robinson Styron, a Portsmouth matron who died in 1911, has a beautiful headstone here. There is an unmarked grave between her and another Portsmouth native, John B. Styron, who died in 1911. Not far away is the obelisk-shaped tombstone of Albert L. Roberts who died in 1907. In 1932, another Portsmouth man, David Salter, became the last person to be buried in the Styron Cemetery.

All those interested in Cedar Island cemeteries are implored to help maintain this important graveyard of Portsmouth families. The occasional use of a small lawn mower would go far to improve the cemetery's appearance, and this may lessen the threat of headstone theft. Even with such efforts, the cemetery's serenity and quiet charm are much diminished by a mobile home squeezed in almost right against the northernmost graves.

One possible site where Portsmouth graves perhaps can be found lies just east of Cedar Island's artificial harbor. An old

memory persists in this neighborhood of Portsmouth Islanders buried there, and recently discovered ballast stones do suggest the presence of possibly five graves. The names are no longer known, but if people from Portsmouth are buried at the site, they may have been related to native Cedar Islander Randall Daniels or to his wife, Lovey Styron Daniels. This branch of the Daniels family lived nearby during the era of Portsmouth burials on Cedar Island.

No other Portsmouth cemeteries are presently verifiable on Cedar Island. However, two were known to have existed on Hog Island. One of these was formerly located near Back Bay but has now been lost to erosion. Still, the 19th-century tombstone of John Gaskill recently was seen on the shore there. He was a 19th-century Portsmouth mariner related to the early Hog Island Gaskills and may have been buried in a now-lost Gaskill cemetery.

Years ago at this same Hog Island site, the poetically inscribed, white marble monument of John English was "discovered." John was a son of Portsmouth's distinguished English family--another group with earlier ties to Hog Island. His is the only locally surviving example of an English family tombstone. But John English's quaint, handsome monument has been put to better use as a table top in a Sea Level home. (It makes an excellent curio, you see.)

Finally, there is one other Portsmouth family buried on Hog Island. Isaac Gaskill and his wife Dorcas, a former slave on Portsmouth, moved to western Hog Island following the Civil War. They almost certainly were buried there, yet only ballast stones mark their reputed graves near Dorcas' old homesite.

Although little is recorded of Hog Island's only African derived family, one of their daughters is known to have married Jim Downing. Afterwards, the Downings moved near the old Robinson Cemetery on Cedar Island. Ironically, they are today the only family still buried on this venerable part of the island, and their own small cemetery there has been lovingly restored by some of their former Cedar Island friends.



Sketch by Dan Loughton Willis.

There have been various reasons forwarded to explain why so many Portsmouth residents were brought to the Cedar Island area for burial. One speculation sometimes heard is that the weather-beaten Bankers sought grave sites less prone to storm surges and the other destructive effects of hurricanes. Another speculation is that Portsmouth Islanders eventually ran out of family plots. There may be merit to such arguments, but an equally valid assertion is that people were sailed from Portsmouth to be buried among relatives in older family cemeteries. Indeed, this seems to have been the case in almost every example known today.

*(Research and other source material courtesy of Lucille Goodwin Willis and Jenny Willis Davis.)*



## The Ca'e Banks Brogue

### The Language of the Cape Lookout Bankers, Part 2

James Newman Willis III

One of the most important words in the Ca'e Banks Brogue is the term, "Ca'e Banks," since it is the term by which both the Banks and the Bankers are called. Since there has been confusion about this term for as long as I can remember, I thought it might be a good idea to cover it now at the start of this series.

There is no tradition among the "Ca'e Bankers" of how the term "Ca'e Banks" arose. I am familiar with four possible theories as to its origin, which are suggested by the three ways I have seen and heard it spelled. One is that the term is simply a contraction of "Cape Lookout Banks." This would give us the spelling, "Ca'e Banks." Another is that these Banks were named the same way as were the "cays" or "keys" in the Bahamas or Florida keys. Here the spelling would be "Cay Banks." A third possible origin is that the Banks were named for "Kay" giving us "Kay Banks." The last theory is that they were named "Kay Banks" for something unknown, the spelling of which is also unknown, and "Kay" is only the phonetic spelling of that unknown term.

Of all these theories and associated spellings I like "Ca'e Banks" best for the following reasons:

1. I have never seen any map or chart that labels the Banks in question as "Cay Banks" or "Kay Banks," but I have seen three maps that label these Banks as "Cape Lookout Banks."
2. If the name is "Cay Banks," then to the best of my knowledge there are no other islands named "Cay" in North Carolina, which would seem to indicate that "Cay" was not a very popular word in this state, and may even be incorrect here.

*These Bankers and their descendants had a strong tendency to contract and shorten words, and it would be very logical to contract "Cape Lookout Banks" to "Ca'e Banks."*

3. These Bankers and their descendants had a strong tendency to contract and shorten words, and it would be very logical to contract "Cape Lookout Banks" to "Ca'e Banks." I think that the term "Ca'e Banks" may have evolved in the following manner. First, "Lookout" was omitted, since everybody knows that there is only one Cape in this area, namely "Cape Lookout." Next, the "p" in "Cape" was left out and the word contracted to "Ca'e," completing the process. We were left with "Ca'e Banks."

As an analogy let's look at the shortening of the Salter Path term, "Confederate crab." First, "crab" was left out, since everybody knows that all Confederates (originals that is) except crabs are long gone. Next, "Confederate" was shortened to "federate" by omitting the initial "Con-." Finally the "-erate" was left out leaving only "fed-." The term has been shortened by

four whole syllables. Just think about how much unnecessary talking has been saved over the years by this one contraction.

But, perhaps the most important reason of all for the omission of the "p" from "Cape" in "Cape Banks" was pointed out to me by Capt. Josiah Bailey. The Ca'e Bankers have a passion for not having two consonant sounds back to back. In other words they don't like to end one word with a consonant sound and immediately follow it with a word that begins with another consonant sound. The speech just doesn't flow as it should with all of these consonant stops. Take for example the word "just" (pronounced "jest"). When it is followed by a vowel sound, the final "t" is retained, however, when followed by a consonant sound, the "t" is omitted. In "just another one," "just" ends with a consonant sound and is followed by the vowel sound of the "a" in "another," so it retains its "t." But, if "just" is followed by a consonant sound, the ending "t" is omitted, as in, "jus' right."

Similarly in the term "Cape Banks," although "Cape" is spelled with a final vowel, "e," it ends with a consonant sound and "Banks" begins with a consonant sound; therefore, it is improper usage to place the two words back to back. So, the expression is corrected by leaving out the "p" in Cape. This omission changes "Cape" to "Ca'e" with a vowel sound ending. Now "Ca'e" and "Banks" may be joined together back to back, since harmony has been achieved. Not only has harmony been achieved, but the expression is now even shorter, flows much better, and can be said even faster, which is very important in some versions of the Brogue.

4. Cape Lookout Bankers and their descendants, when speaking, used "Cape Banks" (whenever they did use it) and "Ca'e Banks" interchangeably, suggesting to me that the latter is merely a contraction of the former.

5. Placing the two words "Cay" and "Banks" together forms a redundant expression, since "Cay" (from the Spanish word, cayo) means a small low island and "Banks" (from the Middle English word, banke) means a long narrow sandy island. So, when you say "Cay Banks," you are really saying the same thing twice, that is, "Island Island." This doesn't make any sense if you are trying to name a place. You can logically say "Cay Lookout," "Lookout Cay," or "Lookout Banks," but not "Cay Banks."

6. To the best of my knowledge there has never been any tradition of any of the Banks or any place on the Banks named for a woman called "Kay" or a man called "Kay" either for that matter.

7. If there is something unknown that is pronounced like "Kay," and from which the term "Kay Banks" arose, then I have never found any evidence of it. So, for the above reasons I will use the spelling, "Ca'e Banks," and everybody else can spell it the way they want to. The important thing is that we always let the reader know precisely to which Banks or people we are referring.

# Spring

Thelma Simpson

*"In spring a young man's fancy turns to love, so saith the poet."*

We look forward to spring for many reasons; farmers do their planting in the spring; families plan vacations in the spring; flower growers clean out their flower beds and plan new plantings of azaleas, bulbs and small plants "rooted" the year before, and buy new plants and bulbs of many varieties and new ones to replace seedy-looking ones.

It is a time of year when birds return to the feeder; shrubs as azaleas, forsythia, mock orange and other spring flowering shrubs put out new growth and begin to bloom again. Don't forget "sweet violets" which were a "must" in every garden at one time and were passed from generation to generation along with "cuttings" of rambling roses, crepe myrtle and oleander.

I recall many years ago, upon returning from the hospital, the first sight that met my eyes was row of blooming violets. I stopped to pick a bouquet for my bedroom as they smelled so good. It was this sweet smell that inspired the poet to write, "Come, Smell My Sweet Violets."

What can be more lovely than viewing rows of new potatoes, cabbage and green corn growing by the highway while on a spring outing?

Last fall, while on a trip to Raleigh, I was surprised to see fields of unpicked cotton along the roadway. Upon asking why this cotton remained unpicked, I learned that cotton pickers do not get all the cotton balls. When I was a young girl of eleven or twelve, a man came to our house and asked our parents if we would come and pick his cotton crop. As we were always willing to do anything to make extra spending money, we readily consented. Next morning, bright and early, he came and took us to his farm and showed us how to pick cotton.

Before we started, we had to take rope and tie to each end of a bag and tie it around our waist, so our hands would be free to pick with both hands. When the bag became too heavy to drag, we dumped it into another bag. I think we were paid fifty cents per hundred pounds and we had to work hard to get enough to earn one dollar per day. The weather was hot and we had to go all the way up to the house for water.

We were also expected to help Mama with spring cleaning. Spring cleaning to Mama was taking everything moveable outside to beat, wash, air-out -- or all three. Bedsteads, spring, slats, mattresses, pillows, featherbeds, and rugs all fell prey to Mama's determination to clean. Anything not washable, like heavy rugs and quilts, were thrown over a line and "whammed" with slats or other large size pieces of wood. Bedsprings had goose wings pushed into every coil, wherever whisk brooms wouldn't reach. Pillows and featherbeds were slammed and banged to loosen the feathers and then put into the warm sun-shine for hours.

I recall one particular spring cleaning. We had reached my brother's room. (Being the only boy, he had a room to himself, while we four girls had to share the SAME room.) While clean-

ing out the washstand (anyone remember those?) we found a quart jar full of some liquid, with prunes in it. Curiosity got the best of us and we tasted this concoction. Later, Mama slipped back in and took another swallow. Being thirsty, I did the same thing. By the time we were hauling those feather beds back upstairs, Mama and I had the "silly- giggles." Sister Fannie, not knowing why we were so tickled, was quite disgusted with us.

It was after one of these spring events that I was telling an old colored lady about our ordeal. She replied: "Lord, Honey, if my windows need cleaning, I clean them; if my beds need airing, I air them. So when spring comes, I don't have any cleaning to do." She had the right idea. With Mama, I think it was from habit, passed to her from her own mother.

Spring sales were always looked forward to by thrifty housewives for it was then they could afford to buy more of the "necessities" for a large family. Sears Roebuck was in business way-back-then. Also, Montgomery-Ward, National Bellas & Hess, Chicago Mail Order, Spiegel-May et al. These stores always sent out spring sales catalogues filled with items we needed. The rural post offices were always busy in the spring as well.

In Carteret County, many folks looked forward to spring because of the spring -- or "wild" -- onions that grew along the edge of the roadside or in abandoned fields. Nothing tasted better to some folks in those days, than a "mess" of wild onions cooked with, or without, salad greens.

Then, there are spring chickens, hatched in early spring that later wind-up in a pot for Sunday dinner when "the Preacher" came.

For my dear Grandmother, spring time was the time of year for removing the old sand from the kitchen floors, scrubbing it to a glossy shine, then covering it with clean and dried sand. Somehow, she always timed this with my visit. She'd tell me "Scrub hard, give it 'what Paddy dreamt.'" I finally found out what "Paddy dreamt."

In spring, the children of Lennoxville began their school term at the little one-room school. The school term was from spring until fall to conform to the weather. We looked forward to going to this school for we were associated with the other children of the village who lived "across the Point." We attended this one-room school until 1922, when the county schools were consolidated with the city schools. Then we traveled by boat to the Beaufort schools until the road was paved in 1927. Since then, the children of Lennoxville have been bussed to the city schools.

We look back to those days at the one-room schools. We had good, dedicated teachers and were fully prepared to compete with the students in the large, city schools. While attending the one-room, one-teacher school, we enjoyed going to pick wild berries in summer, gather wild honeysuckles and pick chinquapins later-on.



*Baseball Nostalgia  
Rodney B. Kemp*

*(With special thanks to Edgar Guest's  
"Circus Memories")*

*Oh, never comes the spring with the  
freshness of its call  
But I remember a little boy who lived  
for playing ball.  
And out there on the green of Ebbets  
Field I see  
A little leaguer of too long ago was  
hopeful he would be.*

*He did not care for "grown-up" things; a  
more appealing thought  
Was flitting quick from base to base,  
slim chance of getting caught.  
And all the money ever printed, he'd  
gladly trade at least  
To have the chance to bat behind the  
fabled Pee Wee Reese.*

*He longed to be a Dodger; a Red, a  
Giant, a Sox;  
And he knew he would have made, but  
the chance he never got.  
For fate, the breaks, fortune's wheel (or  
was it Dad?)  
Combined to suggest the lifework of  
this ballgame dreaming lad.*

*He would not now retrace life's steps;  
for career and family are loved.  
And he how knows a ball career would  
have ended in a "dub."  
But still when anthems echo and "play  
ball!" the blue men shout,  
A little boy of forty-five walks wide-eyed  
round about.*

## *County Baseball Scrapbook*



**Beaufort - Morehead baseball team (1930's)**

**Top Row:** Paul Davis - Davis, Ticky Willis - Beaufort, ? Eldridge - Morehead City, Walter Davis - Morehead City, Vincent Lawrence - Morehead City  
**Middle Row:** Leslie Davis - Morehead City, Norman Skarren - Beaufort, Francis Longest - Beaufort, Robert McCready - Morehead City, Ralph Hassell - Beaufort  
**Bottom Row:** Jetta Ball - Morehead City, Charles Hassell - Beaufort, Nat Pake - Morehead City, Harry Van Horn - Morehead City, Bob Cushman - ?

OH! I almost forgot one of the most important aspects of spring; SPRING FEVER and the antidote. Every spring when I was growing up, Mama gave us something for what she termed spring fever. The remedy for this complaint was a dose of calomel, chill tonic or some other concoction. I remember one cure for spring fever I will never forget. Mama bundled her brood up and persuaded Papa to take us to a doctor in

Beaufort. In those days, this trip was by boat. Mama took us to OLD Dr. Loftin, whose office was over a store, located about where the parking lot for the Beaufort House is today. Dr. Loftin prescribed a large dose of Castor-Oil, taken in early morning, followed by BLACK coffee (no breakfast). Now, many, many years later, black coffee still tastes and smells like Castor-Oil to me! Some things just cannot be forgotten!

## *The History of Franklin Masonic Lodge No. 109, A. F. & A. M.*

*Marion Noe*

North Carolina has some "FIRSTS" that we are proud of, and Carteret County also has a few "FIRSTS". The first land sighted by Englishmen was Bogue Banks, when Sir Walter Raleigh's first expedition, under Amadas and Barlow in 1584, came to these shores. Manteo (with his brother Wanchese, who returned to England with Amadas and Barlow) were the first American Indians to visit England. Manteo was born on Harkers Island. The first money ever provided in North Carolina for public education was given by James Winwright of Beaufort, who, by will in 1744, provided for a "free school", to teach, among other branches, "decimal and vulgar arithmetic." I would not like to say that "common fractions" came from "vulgar arithmetic." But our town is a first in public education in North Carolina.

As to MASONRY, Carteret is not a first, but well along towards the top. Though Masonry has an ancient and honorable history, "the consensus of reliable opinion affirms that the premier Grand Lodge of England organized June 25, 1717, A.D., is the mother of all regular Masonic lodges of the three craft degrees." As our mother Grand Lodge, its first charter granted in America was in 1731, instituting St. Johns No. 1, at Boston in Massachusetts. The first lodge in North Carolina was instituted in 1754. So Masonry was begun in Carteret County only 44 years after its beginning in our State. For at the Straits, in our county, in 1798, there was instituted a Masonic lodge named Jerusalem No. 35, with 28 members. In 1807 this lodge had 43 members.

In 1806, Taylor Lodge No. 48 was instituted in Beaufort, with 17 members. Listen to the Carteret County names among these 17 men who started a Masonic Lodge in Beaufort: Micajah Pigott, Master; Jechonias Pigott, S.W.; Joseph Robinson, J.W.; Samuel Thomas, S.D.; Gilbert Rumley, J.D.; James Stanton, Treas.; Brian Hellen, Secty.; Samuel Thomas, David Wallace, Samuel Smith, Jacob Henry, John C. Phillips, Isaac Burdick, Henry Coakley, James Cee, Isaac Cahill, and Abram Pigott.

They reported 10 pounds for charter, or about \$50.00 in our money; and 5 pounds annual quota or about \$1.50 per capital. A strange thing is that in 1807 many of the same names of members are included in the roster of both Jerusalem and Taylor lodges.

One of these men holds a unique place in North Carolina history. I refer to Jacob Henry, who was a Jew. He represented Carteret County in the NC General Assembly in 1808 and 1809. Before the Constitutional Convention of 1835, no one in the

state was permitted to hold office in the state who did not believe in the Protestant religion, who did not believe in the "divine inspiration of the scriptures." In other words, an atheist, a Roman Catholic or a Jew could not hold office. In the Assembly of 1809, a resolution was introduced to vacate the seat of Jacob Henry, the member from Carteret because he denied the divine authority of the "New Testament." He delivered a great speech in his defense which is printed in Wheeler's NC History, published in 1851, and for many years out of print. This was the first time the question was ever raised in the state, so Carteret County has another first.

In 1812, Taylor Lodge No. 48, surrendered its charter. In 1817, the following items appear in the Grand Lodge proceedings: Dec. 1st. "Bro. Pinkham handed in the memorial of the late Master, Wardens &, of Taylor Lodge (dissolved), No. 48, praying to be reinstated, referred to M.W. Grand Master." "Dec. 2nd. On motion, Bro. Pinkham, ordered that Taylor Lodge by dispensation have the use for one year of the jewels lately belonging to Jerusalem Lodge, demised."

NATHANIEL PINKHAM was a visitor. "Dec. 6th. On this day dispensation was approved and signed by the Grand Master for Taylor Lodge, Beaufort, and it was given the number 69.

In 1818, Nathaniel Pinkham acted as Grand Junior Warden of the Grand Lodge. He was representing Taylor Lodge, and Isaac Hellen, visitor, Whittington Davis, visitor of late Jerusalem

Lodge. These three men should be especially mentioned because of their work in Masonry and their activities in the life of Carteret County. Nathaniel Pinkham represented our county eight terms in the House and three terms in the Senate.

ISAAC HELLEN was a prominent citizen of Beaufort, and over a hundred years ago was Supt. of the Methodist Sunday School. He served many years in the House and Senate from Carteret County. He was the great grandfather of our late postmaster, Mr. W.H. Taylor.

WHITTINGTON DAVIS was an active citizen of our county. He represented Carteret County in the House and served more terms in the State Senate than any other citizen in Carteret County's history. He was an active Baptist layman, an energetic Mason and influential in the civic and political life of our county. He was the great grandfather of our late townsman and businessman, Mr. Elmore Davis.

These three men were representing the county in the year 1818, as well as being active in Masonic work. In the proceedings of 1818, this item appears: The "House formerly occupied by Jerusalem Lodge No. 35 of Carteret County was ordered sold





by Nath. Pinkham." No doubt this was the end of Carteret's first masonic lodge which had 48 members as early as 1807.

OTWAY BURNS, the famous Commander of the Privateer "Snap Dragon", was a member of Taylor Lodge in its active life and represented Carteret County many times in the General Assembly. Burnsville, county seat of Yancy County, was named for him. He was an outstanding Privateer in the War of 1812-15.

In 1840, Taylor Lodge No. 69 had only 17 lodges in the state with number older. If the brethren had taken the number of 35 when Taylor was reorganized, there would have been 7 lodges with older numbers. If they had kept No. 58, which they had a perfect right to do, no doubt, there would have been only ten lodges with older numbers. Taylor Lodge No. 69 surrendered its charter in 1842.

On December 5th, 1845, Franklin Lodge No. 109 was instituted. I am sure all of us regret that those brethren did not keep the old name and number, certainly the number.

The following men are the ones whose names appear in the report of Isaac Ramsey, Master, written by him and dated Nov. 27th, 1845. The writer saw this report, splendidly written in a very legible hand. These are the men who constituted Franklin Lodge, when it began its activities on Dec. 5th, 1845. These names should ever be honorable to Masons who love Franklin Lodge: Isaac Ramsey, Master; Ralph Howland, S.W.; Elijah Pigott, J.W.; Joel H. Davis, Treas.; Rev. Thomas Page Ricaud, Secty.; Wm. J. Potter, S.D.; Henry Waters, J.D.; Samuel L. Dill, S.S.; Gayer Chadwick, J.S.; James H. Noe, I.G.; William H. Piver, Tiler; John C. Manson, Jr.; Zaccheus Farrow; Solomon H. Walker; James T. White; George Lane; Robert H. Sabiston, En. App Transient Brethren; Jechonias Pigott, Past Master; Elijah Whitehurst, Past Master; Thomas Marshall, Past Master; James W. Hunt and Isaac Hellen, all Past Masters.

Master Masons, formerly members of Taylor No. 69: Wm. P. Marshall, R.D. Stewart, Benjamin Ellis, Whittington Davis, Anson Harker and Anson Gaskill.

No doubt these men were good and true citizens and greatly interested in Masonry. Some of them are better known than others. We would like to know about all of them:

ISAAC RAMSEY, Master of Franklin Lodge 109, when it began business and for nineteen years, was a prominent merchant and businessman in Beaufort. He had a great deal to do with the life of the town and was known as "one of the big four", referring to four men in the business life of Beaufort and Carteret County. He was the grandfather of our late brother Isaac E. Ramsey and the great-great grandfather of our brother Edward Arrington, Jr.

RALPH HOWLAND was a former influential citizen, and he was the grandfather of our Tiler for many years until his death, L.C. (Herman) Howland.

ELIJAH PIGOTT was a citizen of Straits and had many descendants living in the county. He was the grandfather of Capt. Joe Pigott, our late brother who was a member of this lodge for over fifty years.

JOEL H. DAVIS is another citizen of our county and Treasurer of same when he died in 1868, left two sons who

had much to do with business of the town and county, J.C. & J.H. Davis. The latter was a member of Franklin Lodge for many years, as well as his son J. Harry Davis.

WILLIAM J. POTTER the founder of the Potter name in Beaufort, came from Maryland about 1827, sent here by the Government to construct the new fort on Beaufort Harbor which was to become Fort Macon. About a year later he married Elizabeth Davis, daughter of James Davis and sister of Joel H. Davis. He was evidently an operative mason of the first water, if the fort now standing is to be taken as an example of his work. It was while Fort Macon was being constructed (between 1828 and 1835), that the brick building on Turner Street just north of our lodge was built. The brick masons (after they had returned to Beaufort for the night) by torch light, built this building and it was originally constructed for Taylor Lodge No. 69. However, Taylor Lodge "went down" and the building was sold to Concordia Lodge No. 11, I.O.O.F., by the administrators of Isaac Hellen. The Odd Fellows bought this property in 1848 and it has been used by this fraternity since its organization in Jan. 1847, no doubt using it before it was purchased. This was the eleventh Odd Fellows Lodge organized in North Carolina and has never lost its charter even during the hectic days of the Civil War. There are only two or three lodges in NC older than Concordia. Mr. Potter was great grandfather of our late Bro. T.T. Tom Potter.

SAMUEL DILL was the progenitor of the Dill family in Beaufort. He was the grandfather of our late local businessman, John H. Dill.

WILLIAM H. PIVER, carrying on the French Huguenot name of the early settlers of Carteret and Beaufort, was a merchant in Beaufort. He was the grandfather of our late Treasurer who was a most active Mason and citizen, Charles H. Bushall.

JOHN C. MANSON, SR., was one of quite a few of that name, and was the father of Capt. "Chap" Manson of the Confederate Army. Also grandfather of our genial late brother, Russell Manson.

JAMES T. WHITE was one our outstanding citizens, and bought the old Episcopal Church building that stood back of the present Methodist Church that was St. Johns Church, established here very early. This congregation, having bought the lot on which the church was constructed, from the county in 1724 and the deed recites that the building on it was the court house, of course the first one built in Carteret County in 1722, when it became a county. This building erected later near the present Methodist Church was moved down on Front Street in front of Mr. White's home shortly before the Civil War and used as a store. In the great August Storm of 1879, this building, along with the Atlantic Hotel and many other buildings, was swept away. August 18th for many years was a memorable day in local history. Mr. White was the father of our late townsman, John T. White.

ANSON HARKER was a sea Captain, and in March 1849, with his crew, including two of his brothers, was lost off Cape Hatteras in a violent snow storm. He was the

## Tales of Carteret County During the 1920's

Billie Jean Huling, as Told by Meranious Lee Snipes

*Further conversations with Meranious Lee Snipes concerning his boyhood in Morehead City (1920-1930) and continued from the last issue of The Mailboat.*

"During my boyhood, there were not many good roads in to Morehead for trucks to travel, so the freight trains carried many loads of watermelons and salted-down fish to the northern markets. Most of our roads were shell or gravel at that time."

Lee tells of working the menhaden boats. He was the captain, and worked with the men. He often heard the "chanty men" singing. The crew consisted of about 20 men - 2 white men, others black. Before the use of machinery, the lead crewman - usually a tenor - would chant the songs. They would lift nets with the cadence, all joining in: They might use a song like this: - "something like,

'Mama, Mama, I love you,' or 'I got a letter this morning - see you when the evening sun goes down' etc. They would dip into the marsh with the word 'down'."

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Lee and his best buddy from next door would go fishing for mullets. They would put about 5-6 on a stick and sell them. They would get probably 5 cents for 5 or 6 on the stick. They would take them up to Bridges Street and sell them, but could not collect the money until Friday when the customers were paid.

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A little later, he shined shoes and boots for 5 cents, 10 cents, or a quarter, if someone felt generous. This was probably the mid-twenties.

At that time, there was a National Guard Camp near where the Carteret Community College/Fisheries area is now in Morehead City (1991). In order to pass through the camp, the train had to pass through locked gates at the Camp. Lee would slip on the train, climb up to the top and hide as it passed downtown. As it stopped at the locked gates, he would slip inside, carrying his shoe-shine box. He shined the heavy boots and leather leggings of the guardsmen.

He remembers that Col. White was in charge of the camp. Lee was warned not to come to the camp again, but he went inside again, making his way to the mess hall looking for something to eat. The Col. caught him and took him to his own quarters "down on the water." There Lee was warned by the Col. about the dangers of riding the train. He threatened him, saying he would put him in a place he could not escape from. The Col. told him he had better not ever catch him at the camp again. He then had his male cook prepare a fine lunch for them, and sent Lee on his way.

(I asked if Lee's parents knew he was riding the train. He assured me that they did not know about it.)

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When he was a small boy, his father was working on the gazebo at Bay View Cemetery (either repairing it or in its construction). His mother sent him to get a dollar from his dad, so Lee could go to the store to get pork chops for his dad's

dinner. He went to the cemetery, got interested in playing on the shore (as Carteret County boys often do), watching minnows, skipping stones, and forgot his errand. When he got home, his father had no dinner. He went and got a 6-foot pole and Lee dove under the bed. His mother saved him from a beating that time.

\*\*\*

Lee said that when his father died in the mid-1950's, he went to South Carolina for the funeral and burial. Lee's uncle offered him land there near Greenville. "Just go to the pecan grove and measure out how much you want in each direction," he told Lee. "I'll give you a deed for it. I'll do this if you will stay and help me operate my store and farm." Lee thought it over and sadly told his uncle:

"It's a generous offer, but my roots are too deep in the sands of Carteret County." (Yes, our roots do go deep in Carteret County.)

\*\*\*

Old Man "Lev"

(This story is based on a conversation with Meranious Lee Snipes of Morehead City, who was one of the boys involved in the incident.)

The great orange ball of sun was glowing in the sky when Meranious and two friends began to gather together their fishing gear. The year was 1924 and Meranious and his friends were eight years old. Bay View Cemetery at that time was on the edge of town.

Calico Creek had yielded enough fish for the boys' suppers, so tired, but happy, they prepared to take their bounty home.

The sun vanished rapidly from view and dusk was descending upon the three tired boys as they climbed the hill from the creek, intending to take a short-cut through Bay View Cemetery. As they passed the gazebo and made their way toward the Crab Point Road, a giant apparition raised a wooden lid and arose from his grave, shrouded in an old white quilt. Up from the grave he arose, with a mighty ear-splitting roar. Meranious' heels became as winged as Mercury's fleet feet; Joe Bob ran down Bridges Street never stopping until he came to where his father was working at Back Landing; Jimbo fell on a clump of "pear pads" on Rabbit Hill and lay there sniveling and shaking, fully expecting the shade to bear him away on beams of light. The strings of fish they had caught were strewn from the gazebo to Rabbit Hill, and their fishing gear was dropped by the roadside.

Meranious, who was the first to reach home, was greeted by his mother who asked as she met him at the door:

"Did you bring any feesh?"

Then continuing, when she saw his frightened appearance:

"What happened to you? You're whiter than airy ghost, you are."

"Don't say 'ghost,'" he told her. "I saw one at the cemetery."



## Beaufort Historical Association: A Look Back

*Excerpts from Ruth Barbour's history of the association, Carteret County News-Times*

The Beaufort Historical Association came into being as the result of several activities.

The first was an effort by Beaufort civic groups to rescue Ann Street Cemetery, now called the Old Burying Ground, from overgrowth of vines, weeds and briars.

The second was sponsorship by the Beaufort Woman's Club of historical tours of Beaufort, initiated in the 1950s, and the third and probably most significant in promoting popular interest in the town's heritage was the success of Beaufort's 251st anniversary celebration in 1960.

Work on the cemetery, between Ann Street United Methodist Church and the First Baptist Church on Ann Street started in 1947 ... The first bus tour of town landmarks took place in 1953 ... The Woman's Club sponsored the first tour of private homes in 1957 ... with home tours as an annual event in 1963.

In 1959 the town was 250 years old, but the date slipped by and Grayden Paul, unofficial town historian succeeded the venerable M. Leslie Davis in that capacity, decided there should be an observance in 1960. He collected \$100 from 10 businessfolk in town, promising not to spend a cent that was not in hand. The birthday party was a success and proved to be the spark that ignited general interest in capitalizing on Beaufort's past.

Mr. Paul's small group that initiated the July 1960 anniversary was the nucleus of the Beaufort Historical Association Inc. It was organized as the sponsoring group of the celebration, on Jan. 26, 1960. The certificate of incorporation was filed in Raleigh Feb. 4, 1960.

\*\*\*

1992 marks the 32nd Annual Old Homes Tour and finds the Beaufort Historical Association growing in its preservation and education efforts. It works year-round to maintain and restore historic buildings throughout Beaufort's historical district, provide guides for the restoration complex, and contributes significantly to Beaufort's economic and cultural well-being. The Beaufort Historical Association is a non-profit organization that is "building Beaufort's future from its past."

YOU are invited to take part in the 1992 Homes Tour and Antique Show which will be held June 26 - 28th. The 1992 Old Homes Tour will offer a combination of old and new. Several old homes that have been recently restored will be open, as well as two new homes that were designed using early Beaufort styles. In all there are ten private homes, seven of which have never been opened to the public.

In addition there are period churches, public buildings, a Masonic lodge and BHA's authentically restored Historic Site,

which includes two graceful old houses (1767 and 1825), a courthouse (1796), a jail (1829), an apothecary shop and doctor's office (1859), and a small schoolmaster's cottage (1778).

The Beaufort Fisheries will be open to demonstrate the traditional Menhaden fish processing. New this year is a special program of folk singing by Beaufort's own **Menhaden Chanteymen**. These elderly men tactually worked on the Menhaden boats that were a mainstay of the local economy for many years. They will sing against a background of the many boats, including a present day, working Menhaden boat, sailing up Taylors Creek.

Other Beaufort events include guided tours of the **Old Burying Ground** (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and a "Mourning Exhibit" demonstrating how people in the past expressed grief. The **Carteret Militia** will re-enact a Revolutionary War encampment on Saturday. The **Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild** will demonstrate their craft both Friday and Saturday. In addition that will be a concert by the **Carteret Chorale** on Thursday evening; an **Antique and Classic Cars** exhibit, traditional weaving, quilting, and a silhouette artist. Narrated **bus tours** of the Historic District are available aboard a vintage English double-decker bus. There will be an introductory showing of the film "a Coastal Town Celebrates its Heritage."

The homes tour is Friday and Saturday, June 26 and 27, with the Antique Show at the Crystal Coast Civic Center running through Sunday the 28th. For further information on hours, admission prices and special events, please contact: **Beaufort Historical Association, PO Box 1709 - Turner Street, Beaufort, NC 28516**; or call (919) 728-5225 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Monday through Saturday).



## Echoes of the Past

### Nannie Geffroy revived, developed St. Paul's School

(Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part article on St. Paul's School, Beaufort. Written by George Huntley III, a senior at Beaufort high school, it won the prize given last month by the County Historical association for the best paper on a subject of local historical interest. It is reprinted from the *Carteret County News Times*, May 24, 1960.)

Just as important as the curriculum were the clubs or societies of the school. First there was the *Nu Pi Gamma*, whose name was derived from Nannie's initials, N.P.G. The society met every Friday evening during the school year in the assembly hall.

Its members included the boarding pupils, the kindergarten training class, and all pupils from the sixth to the tenth grades. The programs consisted of recitations, declarations, readings, vocals, instrumental music, and, occasionally, debates. Every student who was a member of the society was to present one of the previously mentioned items at least once every quarter.

The only other society was the St. Paul's School Missionary society. It was organized in 1909. Members consisted of the faculty and the boarding students. Its object was missionary study and work. Meetings were held twice a month.

St. Paul's School endeavored to encourage participation in competitive sports. In the rear of the building there was a large, airy campus which afforded excellent opportunity for exercise and sports. Sports at St. Paul's School were basketball, baseball, volleyball, track, and tennis; however, basketball was the only interscholastic sport.

Only students of high school were eligible to play on the regular school team; but, arrangements were made for lower grades to participate in sports at regular recreation hours. In 1923 and 1924 St. Paul's was "champs" in basketball; and in 1933 they were "county champs".

While athletics were encouraged, it was emphasized that scholarship was of supreme importance, and was not to be sacrificed for excessive sports.

Persons representing nearly every community in Carteret County attended St. Paul's school; others came from Georgia, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Florida. Board, tuition, light, and heat was \$130. The cost for day pupils varied from \$1.00 for kindergarten students to \$3.00 for students in the tenth grade per month of four weeks; however, many students who attended St. Paul's were unable to pay for an education and this is where scholarships came in.

"There were two types of scholarships to St. Paul's School: (1) annual (2) perpetual." Annual scholarships were maintained by yearly gifts of interested friends, individual or organizations, who either pledged to support the scholarships from year to year, or who renewed the pledge from year to year.

It was decided in the beginning that \$10 should constitute an annual scholarship. As work progressed and it was neces-

sary to add a higher grade in 1924, the cost of tuition advanced, but scholarships were still kept at \$10. The second type of scholarships was perpetual scholarships.

Perpetual scholarships were created by gifts of \$200 for scholarship purposes. "The principal was invested as a nucleus for a school endowment, and the interest was applied to the maintenance of a scholarship." Most of the scholarships were memorial, "the first having been established by loving parents of a little boy who had been taken from them." By 1912 there were ten perpetual scholarships.

Life at St. Paul's school varied somewhat from life in the present day public school. A bell announcing the beginning of the school day rang at 8:45 a.m. for five minutes. All of the pupils assembled in back of the school for flag raising. The band would play and then, everyone marched to the assembly hall where Nannie led them in prayer.

Classes were then met. Before lunch they again assembled in the assembly hall for another word of prayer. Sometimes they even sang the school song, *We Sing of Thee St. Paul's So Dear*, to the tune of *Bonnie Blue Flag*. After an hour lunch period, they returned to their classes. School was dismissed at 3:30 p.m.

On Halloween night a dance was held in the upstairs of the main school building. And on Easter morning the band rose early and marched over the town playing hymns.

The school was maintained largely through donations, although a considerable sum was received from tuition, school entertainment, bazaars, and other school benefits. Donations to the school were frequently received from societies, churches, and patriotic friends of New York, Washington, D.C., Delaware, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Massachusetts, and there was one donation received from as far away as Salem, Oregon.

One of the most distinguished benefactors of the school was the Williams family. The family was the proprietor of the J.B. Williams Company, a nationally advertised shaving soap and lather company.

Thus far the relationship of Mrs. Geffroy to St. Paul's School, other than second founder, has not been established in this article. Mrs. Geffroy was superintendent, business manager, secretary, and treasurer of the school for 37 years, and the person with whom all business concerning the school was transacted. She did all the employing of school personnel; she was chief disciplinarian; and it was she who made the school the success it was.

Another person who contributed much to the school was Miss Ellen Victoria Apperson. Miss Apperson, a native of Tazewell, Va., was a graduate of Syracuse university. She came to the school as a teacher in about 1908, and soon after assumed the duties of principal. In 1923 she accompanied Mrs. Geffroy to Evanston, Ill., and she did not return with her in 1926. Under her direction the school prospered as never before.



On Dec. 20, 1936, the foundation of St. Paul's School was shaken by the death of Mrs. Geffroy. The cause of her death was "angina pectoris," contributed by chronic nephritis. A few of Aunt Nannie's loyal teachers continued the school until the spring of 1938.

In the fall of 1938 these teachers again endeavored to open St. Paul's doors. It was of no use, however, for in that same year financial conditions forced them to close the school.

The legal history of the school is one of unsettlement. In 1910 the vestry of St. Paul's Episcopal church deeded all of the land needed for conducting the school to Mrs. Geffroy. On May 1, 1916, Mr. and Mrs. Geffroy deeded all of this land to St. Paul's School, Inc.

In 1937, after the death of Nannie, a judgment was served by the vestry of St. Paul's Episcopal church against a group of persons, among which Mr. Geffroy was a member. The result was a court procedure which ended in the conveying of all the properties used for the conducting of the school back to the church.

Remainders of the school still exist. The wing of the dormitory building was moved to Moore Street, and is presently the home of Mrs. Florence Brooks. The main school building was completely destroyed in 1939. Sanders' Hall and the main part of the dormitory building still remain in their same positions.

The dormitory building is still owned by the Episcopalians, and is presently serving as the Parish House. Sanders' Hall, however, has been sold.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that many of "Nannie's methods were frowned upon, but to my mind she is the most influential person Beaufort has ever produced." Hundreds of America's leading citizens today would be lacking in their education had it not been for Aunt Nannie who lifted them out of poverty and by means of her school, placed them on the Road to Success.

Masonic Lodge, Continued from page 26.

grandfather of the late Capt. John A. Nelson, who was everybody's friend.

Before the Civil War and for many years, one of the county's large land owners and prominent citizens was THOMAS MARSHALL. This interesting tradition is in the family. During the Civil War the Federal authorities went to the home of Thomas Marshall and told him that they were going to hospitalize some small pox patients, probably Union soldiers, in his home. He lived in the county near Beaufort. He protested. Shortly thereafter the officers came back to tell him that they had heard he was a Mason. He admitted it. Then they said no small pox cases or patients would be put in his house.

ELIJAH WHITEHURST was the grandfather of J.S. Whitehurst, H.A. Whitehurst and E.C. Whitehurst, all now dead but formerly active Masons. J.S. Whitehurst served as master. He was also the grandfather of John C. Rice, Past Master, now deceased, who was an active and energetic Mason.

ELIJAH S. PIGOTT was the grandfather of our late Brother Joseph Pigott, who was a member of Franklin Lodge for 50 years, received his fifty year pin from the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, and was presented by the Grand Master himself.

Of the Charter members of Franklin Lodge, possibly the one whose work has had the most to do with former World Affairs, was the Secty. Rev. Thomas Page Ricaud. He was the pastor of the Methodist Church in Beaufort and, while here, married Miss Sarah King, daughter of Dr. Francis L. King and aunt of Messrs. Frank L. King and Edward Martin of Beaufort. In 1880 this preacher was pastor of the Methodist Church in Wilmington and Mrs. Robert W. Chadwick was one of his active members.

One day the Revenue Cutter hailing from Boston made port and the captain, Charles Jones, a pious and active Christian layman of the Methodist Church, brought ashore a young Chinese lad who had "run away" from his uncle, a Chinese merchant in Boston, and hid himself on the Cutter while in that port. Later he was found and the kind hearted captain, feeling sorry for this ambitious and young Oriental (who had told him his story), solicited the preacher and Mrs. Chadwick, with others, to help the lad. After attending Sunday School and services in the church, he was converted and united with the Methodist Church. He took the name Charles Jones in honor of his benefactor. So Charles Jones Soong began his career.

These good people in Wilmington solicited the help of Gen. Julian S. Carr of Durham and he agreed to educate the boy. He was sent to Trinity College in Randolph County, (now Duke University). Later he attended Vanderbilt University, and then went to China as a Missionary to his own people under the authority of the Southern Methodist Church. Time forbids that I go much further in this.

1920's, continued from page 27.

As he related his tale, his father laughed:

"That's just old Lev... He works at the cemetery now and then. After his wife died around 1915, he built himself a brick vault beside her, and when he gets hot and tired, he crawls into his cool brick vault and takes a nap. He's at least seventy years old, and could not hurt a sand crab, let alone three lively boys.

"Well, I'm not takin' any chances," Meranious told him, and never slipped through the cemetery again.

Old Man Lev died about 1926, and it is often said if boys pass through at dusk Old Man Lev will arise from the dead.

\* - "Lev." is pronounced "Leave." \*

It is our intention to portray these persons and events with the sensitivity and love which we feel for them, and to portray them as faithfully as recollection allows. They will always remain vivid in Lee's memory, and in mine through his relation of the memories to me.

## *Young Teacher (or) "Spring Fever at the Cow Penning"*

Ronald Earl Mason

Gosh! Ain't she purty? She's the young school teacher from across the sound. See the smile play around her mouth. Her nose sort of wrinkles or wiggles when she laughs. Just a few freckles across her high cheeks -- my gosh -- she's the best-looking girl on Atlantic. Everybody's looking at her, and she knows it. See the way she swings her backside. Isn't it a wonder how a good-looking girl looks, when she knows someone is looking at her? She's so happy with the attention.

She won't look at me --- and I know she doesn't think I'm anybody. Too many older boys here. She did then though. See! out of the corner of her eye ... Maybe she will, but I'm too ... too ...

"What am I bid? What am I bid? This is a nice heifer ... buy the best bull on Core Banks, see his markings on her?" Charles Mason has the loudest holler on the place. But that's what's going on - a cow penning and Charles' cattle auction. Somebody said down at the shore that he's going to sell six head. His crew rounded up yesterday and the young ones are full of life. See that spotted one kick her heels. She won't get far from her mama though, that's how the crew can tell which young ones belong to Charles Mason.

The cattle are branded so the young ones are claimed by the cow's owner. There must be fifteen different brands on that mess of cows. I heard one of the boys say they let the bulls run free when then drove this bunch south from Drum Inlet. The Outer Banks is narrow from the Inlet to here at the cattle pens, but I'll bet there's a lot of cattle further south towards Cape Lookout Lighthouse. They said they didn't drive from that way because they only wanted to sell a few, just six of the young ones. But, my gosh! He'll get two or three dollars a head, and that's twelve or eighteen dollars. He doesn't have to do a thing. He doesn't have to feed them or even come look at them. They take care of themselves and live off the land. They'll even paw for fresh water!

His fishing crew landed their boats, the spritsail skiff and his cabin boat with the one cylinder lathrup, in Drum Inlet and then spread themselves out across the beach from the ocean to the sound. Then just walk the four or five miles, driving the cows ahead of them. Course, two or three had to walk back and bring the boats here to the pen landing. I heard Bill Morris say they caught some of the ponies, and Elmer Hill rode one -- tamed him enough to ride on down here. That's how they kept the cows in front of them. Elmer would chase those that wanted to break back. Those cows don't want to leave that fresh green marsh grass. It's so bright this time of year, it looks like it was painted. Nothing like marsh with a spring breeze waving it -- my it's pretty. It was worth coming to this penning just to see it.

Well -- maybe that new school teacher, I heard she's from Rosebay, is better to look at. Gosh! I wish she would notice me like she is Howard. I don't care if he is my brother. I sure would like her to be my girl. She only came to Atlantic two weeks ago and I've been fishing at Portsmouth all that time.

I'm hoping I can save enough to buy me a new suit of clothes. I've never had one. I've never had any shore-bought clothes, just the ones Mama makes for us, and five boys of us, too.

We caught right many grey trout. I was hoping for right much as my share, if the price hadn't dropped before we got to New Bern. We really would have had some money, but I shouldn't fuss. The men with families only get one share too. Seven dollars is a lot of money for me, but some of those fellows have five or six youngerns -- and this is the first money our crew has made since before Christmas.

Peeler crabbing will start soon, and I think Archibald Lewis is going to let me go with him. He had the best marsh camp on the Banks. Somebody said he had some potatoes for his crew too. That means we'll have something to eat besides the fish we can catch and cornbread. But you never know for sure you're going to catch any fish. Somebody said the Fulcher crew from Pincey Point had to come home last year -- near starved to death cause they couldn't catch any fish. They missed the peelers too. It gets cold over here on the Banks in the spring, and you can't get dry. Nothing to get out of the weather in but a thatched lean-to out of marsh grass. It's a wonder men don't freeze to death. Potatoes though -- to go along with that bucket of cornbread meal that everybody carries could make the eating more sure.

There! She did look at me! Honey - don't you see me? I want you to really notice me. "Aw shut up Charles Mason. You hollering, "What am I bid?" got her eyes back on you and that heifer ... I know what I'll do! I'll bid, she'll notice me then. She thinks I'm just a boy, why I was born in 1878, and I'll be eighteen my next birthday. Bet she's not much over eighteen herself.

What did he bid? Did he say a dollar and a half? Yeah, 'cause Ambrose Fulcher is bidding one seventy-five. I'll bid while it's low. She'll notice me, then somebody will bid higher and I'll have gotten her attention and it won't cost my anything either.

"Hey there! Mr. Charles -- I'll bid two dollars!" Boy! She's noticing me now. By gosh! Now she's looking like she hadn't seen me before.

"I have two dollars, who'll say two and a quarter? Who'll say two and a quarter? Come on folks, this is a nice-looking heifer. Who'll bid two and a quarter? Now Missy, I guess you didn't think I amounted to much, did you? Didn't think I was anybody?"

"Two dollars once? Who'll raise? Two dollars twice!"

What's this? I don't want no dang heifer --- Somebody's got to raise my bid. Please Lord! Oh God? Please? Somebody's got to say something. I don't want her. If I have to pay for this gosh-darn-old banker cow I won't be able to buy me a suit of clothes. Oh, please Lord! Two dollars three times and sold to young Joe Mason. Gosh darn it! I don't care if she



## Fort Macon

Thelma Simpson

Saturday, April 25, 1992, marks the 130th Anniversary of the FALL OF FORT MACON.

On this day, 130 years ago, local troops threw down their arms and surrendered to overwhelming forces of Union Troops. The attack on Fort Macon had been carried on for several days by both land and sea. They were able to hold-off the attack by ship but when troops and artillery began pounding them from the sand dunes to the west, they knew the cause was lost; being inferior in both guns and ammunition, as well as being plagued with hunger and disease.

At the time of the attack, Fort Macon was defended by two companies of local troops, "The Beaufort Harbor Guards" and "The Topsail Rifles."

Prior to the attack by Federal Ships and Forces, many of the troops were ill of disease, from which several had already died. Fresh foods and vegetables were scarce and the drinking water was impure. Thus many of them were unable to help defend the Fort. So, surrender was inevitable, but not before several men had been killed or severely wounded. (Note: For the names of these men and details of the attack, read "N. C. State Troops" by Manarin. A copy can be found at the Carteret County Library.)

For over seventy-five years following the fall of Fort Macon, nothing was done to preserve this gallant old landmark. During World War II, after minor repairs, the Fort was garrisoned by troops. Guns and ammunition was brought in and gun placements were built in the sand dunes to protect our coast from aggression. When that war was over, the Fort was again left to the elements, its only protection being the jetties and seawalls which had been built at the time.

In the early 1970's a group called "The Carteret County Research Association" learned that money had been allocated by the State of North Carolina for repairs to the Fort for several years. They immediately began negotiations with the State to have this long-overdue work begun on the Fort. After locally sponsored programs at the Fort site, the money was used to do the most needed repairs to the Fort.

At the present time, there is a great need for repairs. Fort Macon goes on record as being the most visited State Park in North Carolina with thousands of visitors and school children coming to visit the Fort regularly.

In schools across North Carolina, students study the Fort's history. They see drawings from "Harpers Weekly," showing the large number of guns surrounding this landmark and many are prone to ask this puzzling question: "Where are the guns?"

Even though Fort Macon now has World War II barracks, Civil War barracks, "talking" exhibits, programs throughout the year, a well-stocked library, a bookstore and donation box, a Park Historian, and is staffed with Park Rangers to talk with visitors and students who visit, there is a still a great demand for repairs, completed renovation and preservation projects, new acquisitions, increased security and other needs. Maybe someday there will again be guns mounted on the parapets of Fort Macon that students and visitors alike may see the "complete" picture of Fort Macon.

For more information on Fort Macon and efforts to sup-

port its projects and programs, contact **The Friends of Fort Macon**, C/O The Carteret County Historical Society, 100 Wallace Drive, Morehead City, NC 28557.

Editor's Note: We would like to dedicate a future issue of **The Mailboat** to the stories surrounding this important part of Carteret County's and North Carolina's history. We welcome YOUR stories, memories, research and/or suggestions for this collection. Please let us know what you can share with our readers.

### Fort Macon

*This OLD fort, built by artisans' hands;  
Still stands to remind us, HOW FRAGILE OUR  
LAND!*

*The sea comes nearer, with each passing day;  
It's walls are crumbling: it's steps, in decay.*

*Yet, once it stood, so proud and tall;  
No enemy's guns could dent its wall.  
It fought a gallant fight in war,  
To repel the enemy shot offshore.*

*The gallant men, who fought and died;  
Lie in unmarked graves, side by side.  
The only reminder, left in memory,  
Is OLD FORT MACON, by the sea.*

*Now, time and tide have taken its toll  
On this OLD FORT, o'er a century old.  
Yet, it still stands, a reminder of that War,  
And the men who fought to defend OUR shore.*

Thelma Simpson, 1990

## Book Reviews

**Portsmouth: Island with a Soul** - by Dorothy Byrum Bedwell

This little booklet of 91 pages, including pictures and diagrams, is easily the best evocation of life in Portsmouth village that I have seen in print. By inference, it is also representative of other "banks" communities at the beginning of the twentieth century while they were still utterly isolated.

The author's family "summered" at Portsmouth each year from 1925 through 1940. There was no choice but to live the "banks" life. She knows what she has written about.

Forty years later she takes a nostalgic journey back to Portsmouth.

In writing of that journey and her memories she provides us the vehicle to make that journey with her, traversing both space and time as well.

The book contains a diagram of the village identifying various home places and other points she describes as she tours the now unpopulated village. In her descriptions of the people and their homes as she remembers them, the community is repopulated. Each place stimulates her memory.

Finally we come to the site of her father's "camp." Our tour of the present village ends there. But the trip through her childhood memories goes into "high gear," the reader is enriched.

Mrs. Bedwell brings this historic site, a curiosity, to delightful life in simple, unselfconscious language. By the end of the book we understand the aptness of the book's title.

I commend and congratulate the publishers for making this valuable recollection available again.

If you have ever yearned for a slower-paced, simpler life than you presently endure, you may escape briefly to such a time and place by reading **Portsmouth: Island with a Soul**. (Josiah Bailey)

**Unsung Heroes of the Surf: The Lifesaving Services of Carteret County** - by Sonny Williamson

In Sonny Williamson's latest work he traces the distinguished history of the U. S. Lifesaving Service in five local outposts for the years prior to 1915, when it joined with the Revenue-Cutter Service to become the Coast Guard. His work is as documentary as it is narrative and should become an integral part of any collection on Carteret County, or on our region's maritime history.

The book is divided into chapters that deal directly with each of the local stations; Cape Lookout, Portsmouth, Core Banks, Fort Macon, and Bogue Inlet. While the various lifesaving efforts are chronicled, the reader is introduced to the large cast of intriguing characters that staffed the lookouts, wagons, and dories and who became "angels of mercy" for many a storm-tossed sailor.

According to an old adage, "every picture tells a story." Sonny builds on that maxim as he allows the journal account of each wreck, kept by the station recorder, to tell its own unique story. On a single page the reader can learn of two-masted schooner, the *Regulator*, capsized by a water spout, and of an unmanned skiff spotted just west of the Core Banks station, that was recovered and returned to its owner, Eugene Fulcher of Hunting Quarters.

Sonny's writing is in his own distinctive style that his readers have come to enjoy and appreciate. I have heard readers observe that he "writes with a downeast accent." Those who have enjoyed *Sailing with Grandpa* or *Jumping Mulletts & Collard Greens* won't be disappointed.

The book is illustrated with numerous period photographs as well as by line drawings. It contains two extensive indexes; one of the various vessels recorded in the text, and another of the many captains, crew men, lifesavers, and volunteers whose story is told.

This is but the latest of Sonny's collection of books on local stories and traditions. *Unsung Heroes of the Surf*, is a significant addition to the growing library of serious studies that tell the colorful history of North Carolina's maritime communities. (Joel Hancock)



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We invite you to clip, copy, and share this information with your friends and family. We are looking for 500 new subscribers in 1992.

## Mailboat Notes, Updates and Announcements

- We are still planning a trip to the Outer Banks History Center in Manteo ... possibly as a joint trip with the Carteret County Historical Society. Keep watch in the Carteret County News-Times for announcements ... Wynne Dough, our friend up at the center, is "anxiously awaiting" a delegation from Carteret County to join him "up the banks" for a special tour and meeting with David Stick. If you are interested in this trip, please let us know. We will be working-out-the-details soon.

- If you're wondering what happened to the SPRING GET-TOGETHER, don't despair ... Let's make it a SUMMER GET-TOGETHER! Maybe sometime in late June -- before it gets too hot. We're working on a special gathering ... plans are not quite firm ... but we'll "keep you posted." Plan to be there!

- For those of you who ordered a Sounds of Carolina's Coast we regret to tell you -- if you had not already figured it out -- that we did not publish it again in 1992. Pre-order interest was limited, and our schedule could not spare the time it would take to actively promote and distribute, so we will hope for another year when The Mailboat is more independent and we can work it effectively. If you have sent money with your order, look for a refund soon. If you do not receive that refund by May 31, please contact us.

- We are collecting orders for Mailboat 3-ring binders ... I already have orders for about 20, but 100 is the minimum order. Please contact us if you would like to order one. PLEASE order by May 31 so that we can have them printed ASAP. (See the order blank on this page.)

- If you have missed any of the back issues of The Mailboat, please contact us. We have been OUT of the "Fall 90" edition, and will be reprinting that in May. Look for your copy by the end of the month. If we "owe" you one, and you have not received it by May 31, send me a reminder. If there is a question or problem with your subscription dates, please let us know. There are 800+ subscribers, and only 1 of me ... Many thanks to the Mailboat Crew who are working to help with mailings, promotions, and paperwork.

- The Mailboat Crew is working on several projects ... a "subscription drive," gaining business sponsorships, contacting North Carolina libraries about including The Mailboat in their periodicals file, an INDEX to the past Mailboat's, and the possibility of other publishing ventures including a MAILBOAT COOKBOOK ... This idea is only in its beginning stages, but we believe it would be an excellent way to create interest in our publication and at the same time create a "financial support" that would allow The Mailboat to cultivate the many possibilities available -- but unable to reach because of limited funds that are needed for printing and postage.

The "cookbook" we envision would include recipes from Ocracoke to Swansboro -- primarily TRADITIONAL kinds of cooking -- incorporated with stories, traditions, history -- all organized together by the seasons of the year. Years ago it was the SEASON that determined what we did and what we ate. We were dependent on the "season" ... whether it be from the water or from our own garden, we depended on "the time of year" for what we had.

We would like to portray this relationship through this collection of recipes and history. It will be a tremendous task ... but one we are excited about. No deadlines or definite plans have been made yet ... we're thinking and planning ... but we would love for YOU to begin collecting your family recipes and stories to be included. If you are interested in helping the "crew" with this project, by all means -- LET US KNOW.

- Keep in touch. We have much to do - and we need YOU to help us get it done. THANKS to all of you ... partners, subscribers, readers and writers ... for giving The Mailboat an opportunity to bring together our efforts to "keep the stories alive."

## Hill's View

Eddie Hill

I'm having a real hard time concentrating tonight as I try to relay this particular view. You see, tomorrow I'll be heading east, DOWN EAST that is, and to coin an old phrase, "nothing could be finer!"

I haven't been home since Christmas and to this ole' Atlantic boy, that's a mighty long time to go without Granny Es' fried chicken, the smell of salt air and above all, that pretty smile on my mom's face. When you are trying to work full-time and go to school full-time, it doesn't exactly leave much time for traveling. But a strange ailment has overwhelmed me, and the only known cure to modern man is a four-hour ride east.

Now the cure does not just come by riding; there's much more to it than that. First, it involves leaving the other side of Raleigh and leaning your seat back just a little. Then, there's a stop at King's Barbecue in Kinston for a snack and some of that good, sweet tea. This is also the spot where you have to make sure that you have some good music selected for that hideous bypass ride. When, oh when, will that become 65 mph?

That about takes care of it until you get to the North River Bridge. It's amazing how much more quickly your heart beats, how much deeper your lungs expand and how much broader your smile becomes after lowering your window and taking a deep breath of that precious Down East air. (For the purpose of sound effects, imagine Andy Griffith eating a Ritz cracker.)

You know, if the folks want to get to Portsmouth as badly as I want to bet to Atlantic, they are going to have one dandy of a HOMECOMING! That's how it is, though; when you leave something good, you can't wait to get back. It doesn't matter if it is Portsmouth, Atlantic or anywhere else, if the memories are sweetened with love, good friends and good times; well, let's just say it isn't too hard to talk people into a return visit.

It is going to be a little strange going back this time. Part of the territory that comes with getting older is a whole new twist to going home. It seems there are always a few individuals who have gone on to a better place since the last time you were there, and a few special people who look just a little older than before. And, it seems, each time you do go home, the person you take back is a little bit difference than the one who left.

But, with each mile further east I drive, I'll be leaving the exegetical papers and the lectures of Duke University that much farther behind. I'll also be heading toward that special part of me that becomes even more meaningful with every passing year. It really doesn't matter what I find once I get there, it's just a matter of being there. If it sounds like I really do love the place, you're right. There is no where else like it.

Well, enough rambling. I'll off to dream of seafood and salt water. But before I go, if there is anyone else out there heading home, here's to you. Be careful while you head to YOUR SPECIAL PLACE because I'm sure there is someone waiting for you too. Godspeed.

Young Teacher, continued from page 31.

ever looks at me again! I don't want no darn heifer. Nothing to do but pay-up. I sure didn't plan this.

"You say, two dollars, Mr. Charles?" Here it is.

"Say, young Joe, your daddy Steve don't have any cows on the Banks does he? Are you doing to take this one off? I'll carry her to Atlantic in one of my skiffs for twenty-five cents."

"No, Mr. Charles, I'll let her stay over here. Maybe she'll have a calf by next year and I can sell it and get my money back. I'll start my own brand. What's your brand going to be? Gosh! I don't know. Maybe my initials. But you don't have a branding iron do you?"

"You can use my running iron, but your initials would be hard to do."

I'll always remember that young teacher. See! There she goes now back towards the landing -- still with my brother Howard. And I'm here with a heifer to brand.

"I know ... I'll brand that heifer with a YT."

### The Mailboat

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### "A Collection of Coastal Carolina Memories"

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This publication is the result of a cumulative effort of many individuals working to preserve the rich heritage of coastal North Carolina. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and ideas.

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It is with great pleasure and appreciation that **The Mailboat** welcomes these individuals to our growing list of **Mailboat Partners**. Our thanks also to countless others who have sent "a little extra just to help." Many times that "little extra" made all the difference. Through their willingness to be a part of the financial support of **The Mailboat's** early stages, this publication will have the opportunity to establish itself as an important part of the preservation of our local history.

We welcome others to join the **Partnership**. **The Mailboat** belongs to all of us ... it is OUR story. Together we can keep **The Mailboat** growing for years to come. We cannot do it alone. Your interest and enthusiasm with what we have brought together in the first few issues encourages us to "keep digging" ... There is so much that needs to be included! Thank you for helping us "get it into print." We look forward to many years of working together as **partners**.

"The Mailboat" represents a network of writers, historians, teachers, collectors, folklorists, artists, crafters, and preservationists who are keenly interested in the cultural heritage of North Carolina's coast. Its purpose is to record and share the unique character of this area, its people, and its maritime history and traditions. Together we hope to establish a resource for anyone seeking to learn more about the distinct culture of Carolina's coastal region.

"The Mailboat," will provide a means of exchange for all whose interest in this area reaches not only to the past, but also is concerned about the future of this changing lifestyle. It will include reviews from local books, features from contributing writers and students, a calendar of cultural events, and information on preservation efforts within the communities of Carolina's coast. A subscription will also include a 10% discount on all purchases from Coastlore's catalog of books, prints, and collectibles.

Join us as we strive to keep the real beauty of coastal Carolina alive. It is our belief that those who genuinely care about the coast of North Carolina—the people, their lifestyles, the environment—can preserve and protect this culture from the changes taking place. We can hold on to the things that make Carolina's coast a uniquely beautiful place. May all of us—natives, newcomers, residents, and visitors—share with one another our love for this truly special place.

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